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NEW STATESMAN

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Mr Callaghan's Christmas

We may imagine him waking in the early hours, with the excited recollection that This Is The Day. Throwing back the blankets, he bounds out of bed and rushes to find his stocking. Yes, it is there! The silver paper around the tangerine in the toe, the little purse of chocolate sovereigns, the party hat, the thing with the bright feather on the end that shoots out with a buzz when you blow it (you know the thing I mean), and the toy trumpet with one note, which will be broken by the end of the morning. And then the presents, the presents. The Action Man Foreign Minister outfit, with the tiny realistic briefcase and the even tinier foreign policy inside. The Defence Secretary doll, with the eyes that shut when you place it in a sitting position. The Dolls' House of Commons ('We couldn't quite stretch to the one with the majority, so we got him the one with the pact; I suppose he'll break it in no time'), with the Dinky taxis drawing up outside.

What a lucky man. Consider it, consider the extraordinary luck of Jim Callaghan. Consider for instance how things looked in 1972, when he was all set to depart for the IMF, and to give up domestic politics altogether. And then the offer never materialised. But it had seemed certain, so certain that Tony Crosland booked a room in the Commons in order to announce his candidature for the party treasurership. Or consider how things looked this time last year, at the end of the great devaluation fiasco (his second), the latest round of Healey cuts, the humiliation imposed by the IMF and the disastrous by-elections. 'The last act,' wrote Paul Johnson in this paper, 'has now begun. Ministers are moving into the terminal, or bunker phase, which overtakes any irredeemable regime or government in its death agonies.'

But the patient survived the death agonies, to re-emerge from the bunker. The irredeemable regime turned out to be more resilient than had been supposed. If, like the cat, Callaghan may be supposed to be possessed of nine lives, surely by now he is on his seventh or eighth. One might think that this would lend a hysterical tone to his administration. On the contrary, the wonderfully concentrated mind seems if anything more serene than ever. This was what nobody quite predicted at the time of Wilson's resignation: it is Callaghan's very age, his knowledge that he is at the end of his career, which gives strength to his premiership; it is his long experience of all the major government posts which gives his premiership such a novel quality. It is said that those who read their obituaries are blessed with a long life (this was true of Bertrand Russell, but not of Ernest Hemingway). Callaghan has read his own obituaries over and over again.

His premiership comes in the Indian summer of his career. Its style is based not merely on his own personality but also on a close study of his predecessor. Where Wilson was devious, Callaghan plays it straight. Where Wilson worried and fretted, Callaghan couldn't care two hoots. Where Wilson saw rivalries, Callaghan sees subordinates. The admiration he has earned from the PLP may be conditional upon his continuing success, but the PLP is by nature a hero-worshipper, and it has fixed its attention on Jim. The most surprising people will take you aside and recount little stories of quiet conversations with the PM, in which their opinions have been sounded and their support respectfully canvassed. As the financial situation improved over the last year, as the economy settled down a little and the polls improved, as the threat of Margaret Thatcher seemed (I put it no higher than that) to recede, the urge to loyalty began to reassert itself among the ranks. Not only in the PLP – in the party at large, with a docile conference in Brighton, and the passive, or grateful, acceptance of the pact.

The pact! What a quiet little success for the Callaghans of the world the Lib-Lab pact has been. And how enormously it has changed the nature of political journalism. Do you remember a kind of article that used to appear all over the Establishment press in which there were calls for a new consensus politics, a national government, a middle party, etcetera? They've tailed off recently, have they not? Various 'isms have dropped out of currency. The Jenkinsites have joined the brain drain. Why – even Dick Taverne announced the other day that he would not stand again for Lincoln. Reading that, I felt almost nostalgic for the good old days of party strife.

As for the radical brands of Toryism so touted by neo-Slobs, and so keenly studied and espoused by Mrs Thatcher, even they seem just a little dated and beside the point. If, as I believe, the great battle in British politics today is over the redefinition of British conservatism, the success of the Callaghan brand has at least given its rivals pause. But as I write these words, I can hear in my mind the voice of a left-wing member of the cabinet with whom I recently discussed the matter. What do you *mean* by conservatism? he is saying. What do you mean by working-class conservatism? The British worker likes common sense. Is common sense conservative? Does socialism have to be anti-common sense? The British worker does not like being buggered about by foolish authorities. Does that make him conservative? The British worker likes Callaghan's plain-speaking style. Does that make either him or Callaghan conservative?

The answer is that the Conservatives themselves certainly see Callaghan as a brilliant exponent of conservative values. Even his biggest blunder of the year, the appointment of his son-in-law to the Washington embassy, was just the sort of thing they in their hearts approve of and understand. As for Peter Jay's supposed blunder in recounting the Moses story, the Tories sought to make political capital out of it, but found, once they had exhausted the limited number of jokes they could think of on the subject, that the idea of the PM leading his flock to the promised land did not seem so ridiculous after all. These kinds of joke have a habit of blowing up in one's face. Not long ago I was arguing with a National Front supporter about the merits of Mrs Thatcher. I said that she had the manner of a village schoolmistress. He replied that that was exactly what the country needed. Perhaps the nation is divided between those who want a schoolmistress and those who would prefer a prophet.

In many ways Callaghan reminds me of Ho Chi Minh. The slit eyes, the thin wispy beard, the pyjamas, the sandals – these are not the main points of comparison. What then? The habit of smoking American menthol cigarettes? The long retreat in mountain caves? The tendency to murder Trotskyists? The grubby yellow vest? Nope, that is not it. Well, *what* then? The brilliant development of the bicycle as a strategic weapon? The period of imprisonment by the French? The vast mausoleum in Hanoi? No, it is none of these things, and indeed I have forgotten already the exact point of the comparison. I think it was something to do with the smile, and the relation of the smile to the cool cerebration taking place behind the smile, a certain Vietnamese opacity in his political dealings.

For of course this talk of honest dealing and straight-forwardness, while correct in a way, should not distract attention from the ruthless side of the old man. Most of the world is run by old men – men much older than Callaghan – and most of the old men are as tough as old boots. Honest Jim may seem in genial form, but he has not forgotten the art of genial ruthlessness – as David Steel discovered last week, when he came back from Downing Street empty-handed, with nothing but a pat on the back to show for his labours.

This time last year it looked as if Mrs Thatcher was preparing to make a meal of Callaghan. This time this year it looks as if the old boot might well be on the other foot. This time next year . . . but enough of this. Merry Christmas.

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Anthony Howard

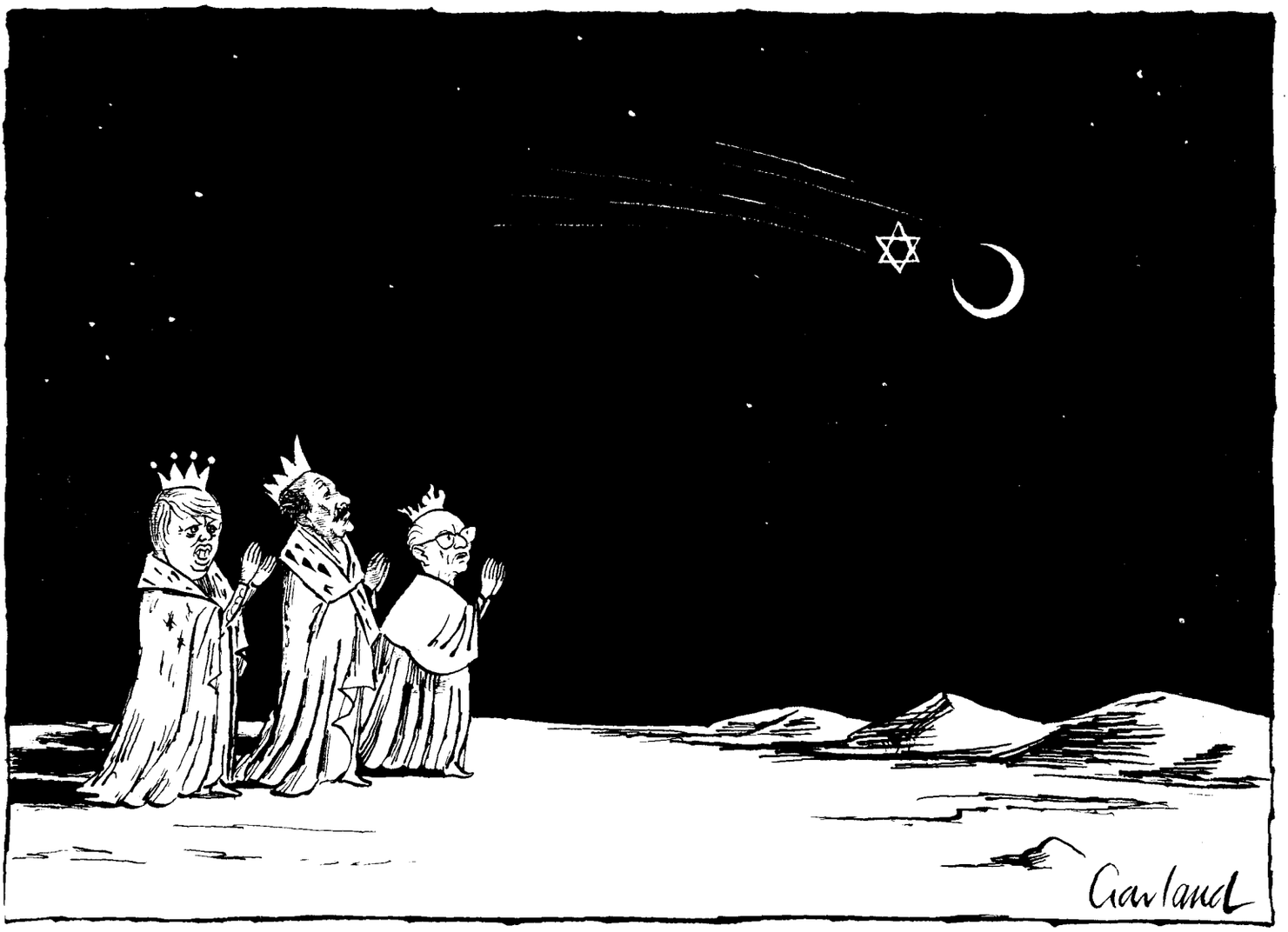
That Was The Year That Was

The normal instinct at the close of any year is (as Miss Millicent Martin used to sing) to 'let it go' – even perhaps to give it a kick to help it on its way. But 1977 deserves better of us than that. Any year that ends with an Israeli Prime Minister spending Christmas Day in Egypt has at least not been uneventful – a verdict which both Mrs Gandhi and Mr Bhutto would ruefully have to endorse. For Mrs Thatcher, of course, 1977 was not 'eventful' enough, though the Queen was undoubtedly entitled to take another view. The Jubilee, however, was generally rated a triumph for the monarchy (with only the NEW STATESMAN entering a minority report) and royalty also had a good year in Spain, if only through proving itself 'democratic' by allowing, indeed encouraging, elections to take place for the first time for 40 years.

Of course there could not be prizes for everyone. President Jimmy Carter entered the White House last January to great popular excitement but only 11 months later his own countrymen seemed to have started wondering whether his 'best' is good enough. Rather the same went for that other 'President', Mr Roy Jenkins, summoned to Brussels amid a flurry of ruffles and flourishes, also last January, but since then mainly heard of making protocol protests about not being treated properly. One or two voices were also to be heard wondering whether *he* had treated the Labour Party properly – since his own defection (and that of his henchman, David Marquand) eventually resulted in a decisive adjustment of four votes in our own domestic parliamentary line-up. Mr Callaghan, however, managed to overcome 'little local difficulties' of that kind and enjoyed, as James Fenton writes on the opposite page, a rather good year.

For that, however, he had to thank Mr David Steel and his rescue operation of the Lib-Lab pact last March. At the age of 38 Mr Steel was understandably anxious to take his party by the scruff of the neck: but did he actually intend to wring it as well? That question must probably now await the grand Liberal inquest to be held in Blackpool on 21 January, but meanwhile Mr Callaghan can afford to smile. Sir Harold Wilson, on the other hand, can't. The year opened badly for him, with the publication of Mr Joe Haines's *The Politics of Power*, and it has not got much better since. Whether out of self-defence or not, he seems to have struck up an unwise relationship with two 'investigative' journalists (commonly lumped together under the combined name of 'Pencourt') and he could well live to regret that just as much as his earlier association with Haines. Certainly they have already got him into a lot of hot water, though not quite as scalding as that experienced throughout the year by poor Mr Thorpe. At least, though, like Mr Heath, Sir Harold amid all his vicissitudes has contrived to make a lot of money.

But then so has Britain, if only through oil. In January 1977 the IMF brokers were still in London and the pound sterling was still hovering at the $1.65 mark. Bank and mortgage rates remained firmly in double figures and inflation stood at over 15 per cent and was still rising. Mrs Thatcher was not alone in thinking that the moment had come for the 'kill'. But last March she muffed her part as Lady Macbeth, and from that moment on the Government started to climb the hill of recovery. Not that progress was regular or uniform: on the same day in April that Labour miraculously held on to the late Anthony Crosland's seat at Grimsby, it also lost by the largest swing of the present Parliament the constituency that David Marquand had relinquished at Ashfield (just as, four weeks earlier, it had forfeited Roy Jenkins's former seat of Stechford). It was certainly a sign of the times that by August Transport House was ready to risk an almost precipitate



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by-election in Brian Walden's old fief of Birmingham, Ladywood a strategem (despite the intervention of the National Front attempting to capitalise on its earlier march in Lewisham) that triumphantly paid off.

One other political stroke that came off, at least in image terms, was the Prime Minister's surprise choice of David Owen to succeed to the Foreign Office on the death of Anthony Crosland last February. Soon nicknamed 'The Flying Doctor,' Owen immediately embarked on a flurry of activity, particularly in Southern Africa. There, however, the year has been predominantly a gloomy one – with Mr Vorster riding rough-shod over the murder of Steve Biko to return to power with the greatest majority in South African political history and Mr Ian Smith (another electoral victor) so far successfully evading all efforts to tie him down to a timetable for transition to black rule. Nor has the Foreign Secretary's own image emerged unscathed in black Africa.

At home criticism of Dr Owen tended to concentrate on his being 'a young man in a hurry' – but possibly that is not so bad a thing to be. Certainly anyone insensitive to how slow the pace of change is in Britain – and how hard the path of the reformer – has only to look at the fate of three government-commissioned reports that came out during the year. The first – in January – was the Bullock Report on Industrial Democracy: it recommended that workers should be represented in boardrooms on an equal basis with the representatives of shareholders – with an additional external element built in uncommitted to either side. It promptly received the most hostile reception of any official report of recent years (newspapers, of course, also have shareholders) and the Government hastily dissociated itself from it. The second was the Annan Report on Broadcasting (published in March) recommending the allocation of the fourth TV channel to an 'Open Broadcasting Authority'; and again the Government, confronted by a refreshingly radical proposal, could hardly have backed away faster. The third – the Report of the Royal Commission on the Press (out in July) – caused fewer problems to Mr Callaghan and his colleagues since it did not include the same element of specific recommendations calling for action; but the minority report here, signed by Geoffrey Goodman (of the *Mirror*) and David Basnett (of the GMWU), at least had some positive proposals to make about the structure of the press. Alas, the last I saw of them was in a pamphlet being hawked to readers of *Labour Weekly* – presumably on the principle that even with a Labour Government in office, your only hope of reform is to rely upon infiltration from below.

Let us hope anyway that, in government eyes, that is a safer tactic that infiltration from outside – for here the Home Office (whose 'censorship' role over the year is criticised by one of its own former ministers, Alex Lyon, on p.877) showed its habits had not changed by booting out last February both Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball. Nor did the Government display much more compassion towards an inanimate 'foreign' creation, Mentmore – Mr Peter Shore allowing it to come under the auctioneer's hammer, all for the want of a million or two pounds of public money. Mr Eric Varley behaved more generously to C. A. Parsons in its fight to avoid being swallowed up by Sir Arnold Weinstock's GEC – but contrived to do so with a little less than grace. British Leyland continued on its profligate career, though the heat was slightly taken off its workforce by some remarks its former chairman, Sir Richard Dobson, saw fit to deliver to a private dinner last October. In any event its pride of place in the Government's intensive care unit appears now to be threatened by the British Steel Corporation.

If, with more days lost through strikes than any year since the Heath era, 1977 was hardly 'the year of the Beaver' – as Mr Jack Jones originally announced he wanted it to be – at least the Government ends it with Phase Three still a mystical, if powerful, presence. The only workers to fling themselves up against the 'voluntary' 10 per cent line, the firemen, look as if they have been defeated and the miners, largely thanks to Mr Joe Gormley, have still to get mobilised. The Government meanwhile stands with General Nivelle at Verdun ('Ils ne passeront pas') and it would be churlish to deny that over these past 12 months Mr Callaghan has fully earned his accolade from the *Financial Times* for giving the country 'about as good a conservative government as we are likely to get'. And only, no doubt, 'the awkward squad' will feel this Christmas even vaguely queasy about that.

Tom Baistow

Fleet Street in 1977

After Fleet Street's blackest year in a gloomy decade of decline it might seem perversely optimistic to scan the skies of EC4 for a silver lining, yet there is a faint gleam, paradoxically from the northern, EC1 side, up Holborn Circus way, where the most recent upheaval has taken place.

But first the bad news. The worst bout of wildcat 'industrial action' the newspaper industry has suffered in any 12 months, has hit the national papers with a loss of some 120 million copies up-to-date. No paper has been spared, from the struggling *Guardian's* modest loss of 17,000 to the major stoppages that cost the *Mirror* and the *Sun* 66 million between them, the *Observer* a week's sale and *The Times* the chance of breaking even for the first time since Roy Thomson took it over ten years and £13m. ago; and no paper knows when the next blow will fall or which of the seven unions, including the National Union of Journalists, will deliver it.

This is the unacceptable face of trade unionism, the obverse of the proprietorial coin, the law of the Fleet Street jungle at its most irresponsible and self-destructive – the endemic industrial anarchy that springs from the vulnerability of a badly managed business selling something as perishable as news.

Yet I believe – for reasons I will set out later – that these Luddite lunacies are the last dying kick of the most outrageously overpaid and underemployed workforce in a country where feather-bedding is too often the norm. The technical unions know the long, profitable jig will soon be up, and that is never an easy prospect for any group, whether it is the boss class facing sequestration or a workers' wage-elite facing the end of the bonanza.

Much more serious, if we are talking about the real freedom of the press, not just the freedom to appear regularly without arbitrary union withdrawal of labour, was the demonstration we saw in the summer of the real nature of the so-called market forces which alone, according to the Royal Commission on the Press, must decide whether a newspaper shall stand or fall. Last year it was the *Observer* that was rescued from death or Sir James Goldsmith by the American oil company Atlantic Richfield. This year it was the once-powerful *Daily Express*, virtually broke and trying to buy time by selling its more virtuous sister, the London *Evening Standard*, to the rival *Mail* of the 'Ryder letter' affair, or the whole job lot to the ubiquitous Sir James. The 'saviour' this time was Mr Victor Matthews, the shipping and building tycoon, who lost no time impressing his simplistic views on the remaining 2.3 million readers.

Where can there be any real freedom of choice or variety of opinion when a powerful businessman can buy himself a national voice for less than the cost of a Trafalgar Cunard liner? Next time it could be the *Sunday People*, perhaps the whole Mirror Group, that changes hands if the parent Reed International finds itself more seriously strapped for cash. What price Aral money in the next round of the auction'

Nor have the *soi-disant* guardians of the ark, the journalists, been creating much confidence that they are interested in anything more cosmic than the closed shop and a differential that would restore them their rightful place in the industry's bizarre pecking order. A lot of spine-chilling nonsense about the coming NUJ coup d'état, the denial of access to the printed word to all but a caucus of conspiring Trots once a closed shop is established has been propagated by the press itself since Lord Goodman launched his 'freedom' campaign three years ago. The fact is that a post-entry closed shop has come about by osmosis over the years on various papers, without any suggestion that editorial hands have been tied in any way, except of course by their proprietors.

At the same time it must be conceded that the NUJ, or at least some of

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Darlington members, have managed to revivify Goodman's bogey and give it new credence by a long and crippling strike to impose the closed shop on the Westminster Press's local papers.

Or take the *Daily Mirror* chapel strategists who concocted the list of 'flexibility concessions' to justify the journalists' claim for a *rise* of £60 a week, plus expenses of up to £100. Items like:

> Flexibility in being willing to go on assignment straight from home rather than reporting for duty in the office when it is in the newspaper's interests to do so: £250 p.a.
>
> Flexibility in allowing the home life of staff and their families disruption by phone calls and queries from the office when the staff are on duty: £250 p.a.
>
> Flexibility in taking meal breaks convenient to the needs of production as well as staff being willing, by mutual arrangement, to miss proper meals and statutory meal breaks in emergencies: £400 p.a.

Shades of *Scoop* and William Howard Russell!

The sums involved are ludicrous enough at a time when the firemen's modest claim is regarded as a threat to the Government's pay policy. But what is more depressing is that journalists could devise such a pathetically maladroit and disingenuous ploy to cover up their real and justifiable case (in the long term) for wanting more money: the fact that Mirror Group typesetters had just concluded a deal, in return for accepting the new technology, which gives them a guaranteed *minimum* of £9,000 a year, or £2,000 more than the average editorial salary.

Preposterous Tariffs

It is demonstrable that a claim on differential grounds would never have got past the managerial in-tray, but even the most frustrated member of the chapel must have realised that a 'flexibility' package of such preposterous tariffs would end up in the funny columns. No wonder the *Mirror* men refused to talk to the press (another shining addition to our collective public relations image as the men who leave no joint uncased in the relentless battle to bring you readers all the facts).

Here is where one may peer more closely at the glint in the sky that emerges from the reasons for the deal with the NGA that sparked off NUJ anger. The main NGA trades, typesetting and stereotyping, are the ones most affected by the new computerised technology. In the United States, where the technology is furthest advanced, reporters on some papers type their stories straight into the photo-composition computer without the copy going through the hands of the new-style typesetter (a man in a white coat who taps a keyboard that can be – and in the US often is – operated by teenage typists).

When the *Financial Times* declared two and a half years ago that if the unions didn't agree within six months to adopt the new technology and cut manning by a third the paper might have to shut down, its plans included an element of the American 'direct input' system. This not surprisingly upset the NGA, who saw their jobs disappearing into the computer's maw, and after stiff resistance the management agreed to modify the plan and spread the change over two years.

But the message was not lost on the NGA, and when the highly professional Mirror Group management decided to go over to photo-composition the typesetters realised that if they were to head off the long-term threat of journalists setting their own copy they would have to sell part of their sacred rule book and accept manning cuts of over 50 per cent. Their price was the £9,000 minimum that broke the NUJ camel's patience, if not its back.

As this paper has already remarked, it is a measure of Fleet Street's present mess that it has to pay that kind of inflated money to be allowed to use electronic techniques which call for less rather than more skill. But whatever the short-term disadvantages of such a deal a fundamental breakthrough has been made: at long last the unions are acknowledging that restrictive practices are on the way out, although clearly they will sell them as dearly as 'market forces' permit.

The other heartening evidence that the older diehards of the virtually autonomous chapels are yielding to younger members who want an industry with some future is the current move towards a merger of four of the unions, including three of the main ones, the NGA, Natsopa (mainly machine room) and Slade (photographic process). Such a merger is obvious and long overdue – the new technology makes nonsense of the old dividing lines, and one all-embracing industrial union is the eventual solution to demarcation disputes that no one could win. Not least, it would rationalise the pay structure and the differential leap-frogging that has bedevilled Fleet Street since the war.

The unions' long tradition of restrictive practices has meant more than just the refusal to use millions of pounds' worth of new machinery that would reduce manpower or overtime: until last month chapels refused to allow their newspapers to print or distribute extra copies whenever union action cut or stopped a rival's production. But Mr Victor Matthews has changed all that. The managing director of Trafalgar may, like Max jun., be finding the late Lord Beaverbrook's editorial shoes too big to fill – his 'new' *Daily Express* could be mistaken for the *Mirror*, the *Mail* or the *Evening News*, depending on which page you turn to – but at least he has brought some much-needed managerial clout into the business.

On 29 November he won a famous legal victory over the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades, the union that handles distribution, when the Court of Appeal ruled that Sogat had no right to curtail production of extra copies of the *Express* while the *Mirror*'s London production was shut down by the journalists' dispute. Mr Matthews was perhaps yielding to euphoria when he claimed that this was the end of union power in Fleet Street, but his willingness to have a showdown, where most managements would have shrugged Sogat's ban off as normal practice, and the verdict he won have surely dealt union power a significant blow.

Darwinian Challenge

Of the Royal Commission on the Press little need be said: at £¾m. it was a costly counsel of perfection based on well-known facts (although it did flesh them out with recent statistics) and curiously myopic on the endemic bias towards the Left and the unions highlighted by David Basnett and Geoffrey Goodman in their minority report. But one good recommendation at least is to be implemented: the Press Council is at last, after 24 years as virtual judge and jury in the press's own case, to give lay members parity with press representation – 18 of each group instead of 20 to 10 as at present.

The wrangle continues over the press charter that Mr Albert Booth, the Employment Secretary, is preparing because the proprietors failed to agree to a negotiated one that would not be legally binding in a closed shop context. The Royal Commission report set out six 'essential safeguards' for the charter that would, among other things, guarantee the right of journalists to write freely and editors to publish contributions from any source. It is significant, however, that the Newspaper Publishers' Association (national papers) has dropped its insistence on legal backing since Lord Goodman resigned the chairmanship, and only the Newspaper Society, representing the hard-shell provincial proprietors, is vociferously opposing the safeguards as 'impractical'. So it will now be up to Parliament to decide.

All this may not add up to an overnight revolution but cumulatively it does show that the Fleet Street brontosaurus is at last wakening to the Darwinian challenge – adapt or die. The evolutionary pace is bound to speed up in 1978, give or take a few idiotic and costly stoppages, as other groups bring in the new technology, and by the end of the decade the complete modernisation of the production process should make it possible for Britain to have more, but smaller, rather than fewer, but bigger, national newspapers. And if the press charter and a stronger Press Council are to mean anything, they can only be better papers.

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Christopher Price

Zimbabwe's Star in the East

Robert Mugabe, the president of the Zimbabwe African National Union, and co-leader of the Patriotic Front, has not been so pampered by the press of late; some have begun to suggest that he is now very badly isolated – even out of the running. A studied impression is being built up, of Bishop Muzorewa with the votes, Nkomo with experience, Smith with the power of the sitting tenant and a settlement somewhere in the offing which will at least cut Mugabe down in size if not exclude him altogether.

The view from Mozambique is somewhat different. Certainly Mugabe has no sort of palatial headquarters; his branch of the Patriotic Front in Maputo operates out of three rooms in a run-down block of flats: there is an atmosphere of duplicating ink and amateur electioneering – envelopes being filled, volunteers everywhere and impressive posters all over the walls. But the atmosphere is misleading. Mugabe has considerable self-confidence and solid assets to go with it.

The first is his base in Mozambique – a country that has been subject to wild press distortion from Johannesburg, with stories of Machel holed up in the island across the bay and afraid to return to Maputo, and food riots in the towns. In fact it is a cross between Britain just after the second world war and Russia just after the revolution; shortages (coffee, wine and soap were in short supply last week), but orderly queues; every enterprise under the scrutiny of the *Grupo Dinamizados* of party workers, but lively discussion within the confines of Frelimo policy; slogans galore, the national symbol of the gun, the book and the hoe everywhere, and brand new stencilled street names below the ripped out predecessors (Avenue V.I. Lenin, Boulevard of Female Emancipation); but above all, a determination to make their brand of communism a genuine Afro-version. And the ultimate objective is always in view – the total liberation of Africa. It is an environment which would make it almost impossible for Machel and the Mozambique people to ditch Mugabe, in spite of the daily toll the country suffers with invasions from Rhodesia.

Nor is it simply ideological support. In the new Afro-communist Mozambique they need a friendly Zimbabwe to survive. A puppet Smith-state would be worse than Smith. Then again there is the awkward fact that everyone wants a settlement which will stick and no settlement will stick without Mugabe. A *Guardian* article written in Salisbury last week suggested a tactical politico-military alliance between Muzorewa and Mugabe on the grounds that they both draw support from the Shona tribe. The Patriotic Front's latest press release in Maputo in response to the Rhodesian attack on one of his transit camps hardly supports the idea:

> We have no doubt that the recent attacks were calculated to create, in the enemy's view, favourable conditions for the projected internal settlement talks between rebel Ian Smith and the African quislings in the country. We regard such talks as nothing but a betrayal of the cause of the African masses of Zimbabwe. Those African stooges, Smith's Four yes-men [Muzorewa, Sithole, Chikerema, Chirau], who will attend them, are nothing less than traitors who stand condemned by the suffering revolutionary masses of Zimbabwe. Their children will spit on their graves.

The truth is that Mugabe is content with his military base at the moment and is happy to leave the political task to the transition period when he hopes to have some control on the ground. Hence his fury about David Owen's muted reception of Smith's internal settlement. 'I only want to know one thing,' he told me; 'Are the British serious?' If so, he is willing to try his luck through elections: if not, like Frelimo, he will win by war. 'And then, there would be no immediate elections.' Nor is it a wholly idle threat; Mozambique is not so much a country as a set of ports and railway lines designed to service the white hinterland of South Africa and Rhodesia with the affluence to which they have become accustomed. Those communications can bring up arms, just as easily as food and oil: and the Russians are as willing to supply them as the Mozambique Government are to let them in.

Mugabe's final advantage is a psychological one. Unlike all his rivals he was educated at a Catholic school (and then in Moscow). It gives him the intellectual edge (he already has one of age) over his opponents, all brought up in the fuzzy, English Protestant missionary tradition. It is the whole difference between Machel's Afrocommunism and the 'humanism' of Kaunda and Seretse Khama. The rigorous combination of the Eastern and Western catechists produces a demand for a new clarity in political objectives – as it does among the leaders of Mozambique. Marcelino dos Santos, Machel's deputy, talking about South Africa, put it to me like this: 'What we want from the West is a clear, commitment to the elimination of the racist regime. We realise an economic boycott cannot be effective tomorrow; we still trade with them; it is the commitment that counts. Otherwise war will be inevitable.' Mugabe has the same sort of insistent demand for clarity about the real political intentions of the West in Rhodesia.

Over the last month he has had just cause to ask questions. He was particularly angry about David Owen's language on the BBC *Analysis* programme on 3 December, about the Rhodesian massacre of women and children in a Zanu transit camp: 'But it also might show the Patriotic Front – and this may have some advantages in getting overall compromise – that the Rhodesian defence forces are simply not on its [*sic*] back'. Unscripted, out of context, of course. But the word 'advantages' betrayed an unfortunate mental stance and the phrase has been blazoned across black Africa with the heavy implication that Owen has shifted towards Smith. Little has been done so far to contradict the impression. 'Brutalities and atrocities have been committed by both sides' is still the formulation even after the massacre.

So if David Owen really wants Nkomo and Mugabe in London or Malta or anywhere else, he has his work cut out. The detachment of a British diplomat from Lusaka to Salisbury over the past months (he has just been recalled) has compounded the impression among the more suspicious members of the Patriotic Front that the internal initiative was British in origin. It will need a supreme effort to get the whole *credibility* of the Anglo-American initiative back on the rails, before Lord Carver can be dispatched once more to Africa to sort out hypothetical details.

All is not lost, nor is everything necessarily so hypothetical. Mugabe insists that it is he who has tried to keep the door open, while Britain is trying to slam it shut. He still wants the Anglo-American plan to work, if the small print can be negotiated to his satisfaction. The crucial small print concerns control of Rhodesia during the transition period between the removal of Smith and the elections. Carver will be Special Commissioner – but who will set the tone and ultimately make the rules down at the grassroots? Mugabe and his friends want enough official influence there to compensate for their long absence in Mozambique. The presidency of the new Republic of Zimbabwe is to him a less important matter. Having outmanoeuvred Nkomo at the recent Patriotic Front meeting in Maputo on two issues – refusal to come to London but continued insistence on elections – there is evidence that he is now quite willing to cede the leadership to Nkomo when the time eventually comes for the two parties to coalesce.

This time is not yet; even proposals for experimental joint commands and fighting cadres which have been made in the past have never yet succeeded in getting off the ground. Fresh attempts are to be made in the new year. As long as the Patriotic Front remains potentially fissile, we shall no doubt witness continuing manoeuvrings by Smith to exclude Mugabe and equivocation by those in Britain and America who are equally politically enamoured of the idea. But Mugabe and his patrons in Mozambique are now part of African political reality. Two pieces of gross and inept greedy behaviour by the Russians (milking the economy of hard currency through an Aeroflot ticketing fiddle and the coast of fish stocks by vacuum fishing) have only served to ensure that Machel's Afrocommunism is firmly indigenous, for all the trappings and slogans. He and Mugabe somehow want to make their sort of socialism come right in Africa, with the example of where it has gone wrong in Europe before them. For the West to ignore the phenomenon is to make war more likely than negotiation, as a solvent of South Africa's problems.

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THAMES

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Jeremy Bugler

Atom-Energie über alles

Thirteen months ago 25,000 people demonstrated at the Brokdorf nuclear reactor site near Hamburg, some of them breaching the *Bundesgrenzchutz* (border defence) fighting with police and getting driven into the razor-sharp Nato-wire for their pains. In November this year 40,000 nuclear workers marched in Hamburg in support of their energy form; a teacher called Hartmund Grundler poured petrol over himself, dying of his burns, in a counter-protest. The suicide was played down by the West German media. 'There is a change in mood now,' says Professor Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, one of the Third Reich group of physicists that Hitler put to work to develop an atomic bomb. 'Three months ago, my colleagues were saying there would be no nuclear energy in Germany. Now it is clear there will be.'

Nuclear energy and Chancellor Schmidt's vision of the SPD and the German future interweave as warp and weft. Schmidt looks to Germany's gross industrial corporations to do the base-load work for the West Germany export performance, which has been achieving about 30 per cent of the country's GNP. Exporting Germany's advanced technology is seen by Schmidt and ministers like Research Minister Hans Matthöfer (responsible for the nuclear programme) as the nation's only option. 'We can't export manpower, we can't export food, we can't export minerals, and tourists don't want to come here. What else can we export but our expertise?' That was said recently by Dr Thomas Roser, director of the Deutsches AtomForum, the nuclear pressure group, but it could readily have come from Schmidt or Matthöfer.

The foundation of the industrial export drive is, in Schmidt government terms, secure energy, and a large home market for technology. Atomic expertise neatly fitted both these criteria, and in 1973, with a very small wattage of nuclear energy in operation, the federal government published its Fourth Nuclear Power Programme, a juggernaut envisaging 55,000 megawatts installed by 1985. The bulk of this work was to fall to Kraftwerk Union, subsidiary of the giant Siemens group; and KWU were encouraged to build a large export programme. Last year, with the announcement of the massive deal with Brazil, providing eight reactors, an enrichment plant and a (bomb-proliferating) reprocessing plant, KWU landed the biggest single export contract in West Germany's history. It sent a fissile *frisson* through the SPD leadership.

The ideology of this trust in nuclear might be described as techno-commercial. Extraordinary faith in the German technologist is held by industrialists and customers alike: Brazil has actually signed up for nuclear hardware, the reprocessing plant, that the Germans have not yet been able to build for themselves. No moral responsibilities are accepted; as Joseph Linen, one of the young leaders of the anti-nuclear umbrella, the Bundesverband Burgerinitiativen Umweltschutz (BBU), puts it, today's posture is simply that West Germany is a commercial nation selling a commercial product. 'We are all commercialists now.' The possibility that these commercial products will fuel the nuclear holocaust is resisted, though the writer Robert Jungk with a new book, *Der Atom-Staat*, is raising the moral question; whether the Germans, albeit indirectly, are to be the agents of genocide for the second time in a century.

Matters started to go wrong for Germany's nuclear proponents, industrial and political, a couple of years back. Part of the trouble from their point of view is Germany's geographic and political landscape; the fatherland's short coastline, a long way from the industrial heart, meant that few nuclear power stations could be sited on the coast. Most are around the Rhine south of the point it meets with the Main, and some are very near urban centres. The Biblis reactors are only ten kilometres from Frankfurt and the Mulheim Karlech nuclear centre only two kilometres or so from Koblenz. Once the nuclear 'ring of confidence' and trust in the scientists broke, it was inescapable in Germany that the local citizenry would be greatly alarmed. (Contrast the German siting to that in Britain, where reactors are in rural areas and the big nuclear sites are in far-flung places desperate for an employment alternative to sheep and wet fish.)

The newly-alarmed burghers were able to make use of West Germany's planning laws, with the division between the Länder governments and the Federal government. And the German courts proved flexible, eliminating any chance that Schmidt could impose a nuclear super-plan *à la* Giscard. Courts have stopped work at Brokdorf, Wyhl (where the trouble started when farmers feared their vineyards would be damaged by atmospheric changes, a kind of bucolic politic) and at Grohude. All except passionate nuclear advocates are thankful for the court's powers; if nothing else they have brought a breathing space in the clash between police toting high-technology crowd-control gadgets and a small group of demonstrators more interested in political opportunism than ecology. In the end, though, Schmidt's epithet for Germany's anti-nukes – 'chaotic' – described best of all his nuclear planners.

For the West German nuclear programme has come down like a runaway lift. The Fourth Programme has been cut from 55,000 megawatts to 30,000 and then most recently, to only 24,000. This has happened because, as in Britain, the latest research shows how much conservation of energy can achieve, at a fraction of the nuclear cost, and because energy demand forecasts are being lopped continually (again, as in Britain). The latest cut came about at Hamburg last month, where the SPD Congress hammered out a compromise between a large section of SPD members advocating an effective moratorium on reactor building, including those in process, and the party leadership.

The Hamburg compromise can be seen as a defeat for the BBU activists, but men like Jo Linen (who works for the SPD as well as the BBU) represent it as a partial defeat or a partial victory, just as a bucket can be half full or half empty, according to inclination. The Hamburg resolution increases the coal contribution, effectively cuts the upcoming nuclear plants from Schmidt's original 35 to some 25 or 26, but allows the German fast-breeder SNR 300 reactor at Kalkar to go ahead, and also the great Brazilian deal. Last week Schmidt's Council of Ministers underwrote this compromise. They are thankful that the nuclear reactors being built can be finished, though they face a problem in that new reactors cannot be licensed until a process for the waste storage or reprocessing exists. The Government is looking to the French reprocessing plant at Cap La Hague for this treatment, but there are some problems here. Young anti-nuclear representatives in the Bundestag, like Reinhard Ueberhorst from Schleswig-Holstein, see Cap La Hague as the soft underbelly of the German nuclear programme.

It is a measure of the change that new plans which leave Kraftwerk Union with virtually no new domestic programme in the offing are seen as victory for Schmidt. Moreover, next year West Germany will spend as much on alternative energy research (including coal) as it will on nuclear research, whereas four years ago nuclear hogged 30 times as much as its rivals (still the position in the UK, where the nuclear establishment in the Department of Energy fixes the allocations). Yet, something of a victory it is, particularly in the way it leaves the German nuclear export programme unscathed, and Helmut Schmidt can thank the unions for delivering it.

Big pro-nuclear demonstrations in Hamburg just before the SPD Congress opened last month were the outward and visible sign of the trade union alignment, for all the fact that KWU gave time-off-with-pay and lent its company buses. (Some strategic redundancies in Darmstadt and threats of the same in Duisburg were part of the planning.) Some estimates put the number of jobs associated with the nuclear programme in Germany at 200,000, and this year the German TUC, the DGB, became broadly pro-nuclear. Strong pro-nuclear stands were taken by the ÖTV (transport and clerical workers) and the IG Bergbau und Energie, a union that combines miners and energy workers, conveniently for the nuclear lobby. Other trade unionists see the link between economic growth and energy growth as absolute and not historical, and they prefer the nuclear job in the hand to the energy jobs in the bush. Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, in fact, a sophisticated nuclear advocate, comments: 'People are more afraid of losing their jobs tomorrow than their grandchildren being killed by radio-activity 100 years from now. So it is that nuclear energy has won its case, but for the worst possible reasons.' It

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is unclear, though, how complete this part-victory will be. For one thing, the anti-nuclear activists are starting to involve themselves in trade union work, and the jobs that a large energy conservation programme will support are expected to be on the ground before long.

For another thing, the curse of nuclear planners – waste – is a formidable problem in Germany. A contract to reprocess German waste at Cap La Hague is expected to be signed soon, and some 200 tons of waste is waiting treatment. Cogema, the company that runs Cap La Hague, will have to expand the plant, and is asking for German guarantees. But even if these come forward, and German spent elements do start to trundle across Europe to Normandy, they will trundle back again after treatment. German waste is German waste and the contract, the word is, insists on it returning eastwards. Their final resting place is planned to be Gorleben, only some five kilometres from the East German border.

Severe problems at either Gorleben or Cap La Hague (perhaps a Windscale-type 'incident' on a grand scale) could jerk the rug from under what is left of Schmidt's domestic programme, unions or no unions. It could still, however, leave the nuclear exporting unharmed, and here anyway is where the AtomForum sees its future. Justifiably, it does not see Carter's bans on exporting of proliferation technology holding up, what with the Pakistan and Brazil deals progressing, Argentina hurtling to the nuclear age, despite all its urban guerrillas in the woodwork, and the perfidious British hunting yen for Windscale. It believes that if there are many developing countries too small to need a nuclear reactor for power generation, the band of semi-developed nations (Brazil, Iran, where the Germans also have a deal, Mexico, Nigeria) make up a fine market. And where Westinghouse gets blocked because the President has principles, the Chancellor is just a businessman and can guarantee delivery dates.

What can go wrong with this notion of a Germany fuelled by its huge coal reserves at home and financed by nuclear package deals abroad? People as different as the young Bundestag member Herr Ueberhorst and the white-haired Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker wonder if Germany's domestic politics will be stable enough to come to terms with nuclear. Surprisingly little thought has been given in Germany to how Helmut Schmidt would have reacted to Red Army Faction terrorists if they had seized the Biblis power station rather than a Lufthansa jet. Oddly, the technology of terrorism is very dated: grenades, guns, aeroplanes – all 'Forties' stuff, though effective. This good fortune cannot be expected to last, especially as terrorists will appreciate plutonium's value as a psychological threat.

Professor Weizsäcker believes that nuclear terrorism is a real danger ('We have to adapt to it, and in the process it might destroy our democracy') but his greatest fear is in another quarter. 'I'm afraid of the reaction of the public and other political parties who neglect the difference between terrorists and progressives. I am even more afraid of this than I am of plutonium in the hands of the Baader-Meinhof gang.' It is a fear of a modern Germany, rich, prosperous, but not troubling to separate the dissenter from the destroyer.

Yet a qualitative difference, in its turn, separates the nuclear dissenter/protestor from other dissenters. The nuclear opponent can feel, and perhaps is entitled to feel, that his protest underpins all other protest and is a fight not simply for the good and just life, but for any life at all. The struggles against class, racism, unemployment, hunger are all predicated upon there being a world to be equal, employed and well-fed *in*. Reinhard Ueberhorst believes that the nuclear opponents' belief in the fundamental nature of their activity may make them less prepared to come to the workaday compromises of most protestors. West Germany has reached a stage in which its government, its governing party the SPD, and its Parliament will not in the near future step in to halt reactors now being built and foreign sales made. Herr Ueberhorst does not go along with the received view that the violent stage of German anti-nuclear protest is over. 'There are thousands of radicals who want to stop the nuclear programme. They may look for simpler targets than reactors. They may look for power lines. I fear it is so.' An oft-disputed charge is that the nuclear-fuelled state will prove incompatible with the open democratic society; West Germany may be the country that settles the argument.

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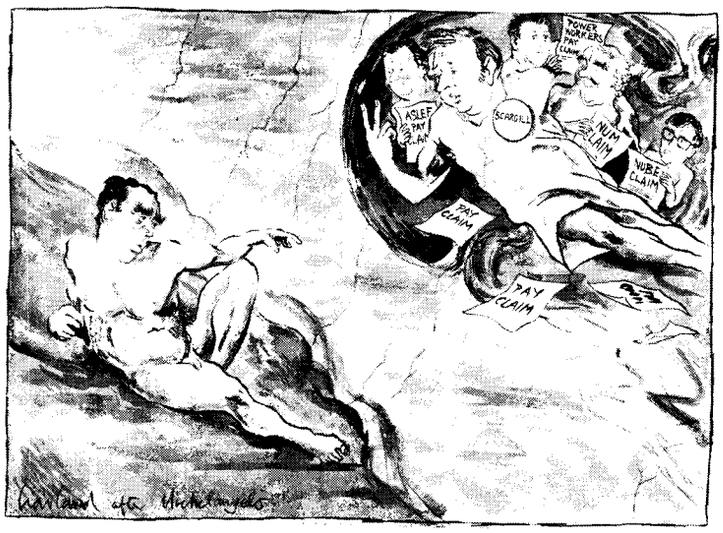

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Paul Johnson

Christianity and History

St Luke is the only one of the evangelists who tells us much about how Jesus was born. It is true that St Matthew provides the fascinating story of the wise men from the East, the flight into Egypt and the Massacre of the Innocents. But the rest of the Christmas background we get from Luke, and very well done it is, too: just the right mixture of vagueness and concrete detail. I should say at once that I find Luke's account quite convincing, in the sense that it enshrines, to my mind, an irreducible nugget of truth: there *was* a census, the pregnant Mary *was* caught in a crowded and unfriendly Bethlehem, the birth *was* unusual and aroused the interest of nearby rustics, and it *was* attended by events which those directly involved subsequently interpreted as portents when they watched the baby thus born mature into the transcendental and tragic Messiah. In short, I believe that Luke's Chapter II (and the first chapter, for that matter) is the written version of a verbal account which originally came from the lips of Mary herself.

And why should it not be? Of course I cannot prove it. But neither can anyone prove that the account is baseless. *The Times* recently wrote: 'whatever the kernel of historical truth about the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem the surrounding circumstances described in the early chapters of the Gospels, particularly Luke's, are regarded by non-fundamentalist scholars as the product of the author's imagination.' I doubt if there are many scholars who take this view. To do so would be arrogant and unwarranted by the evidence. We should remember that all four evangelists were, apart from anything else, literary innovators. They were giving written form to a new kind of factual story, for which there were no models. Luke alone sought to provide a kind of professional polish, by seeing himself as a historian, and using some of the apparatus normally included in the biography of a famous man. Thus he anchored the account of Jesus's life in the actual public chronology of the period, and plainly went to some trouble to get his dates correct. He likewise thought it wrong to plunge straight into Jesus's ministry and therefore sought for information about his birth and childhood.

Luke was not a professional historian, even by the standards of the day; he was an amateur, and may therefore have been inaccurate and insufficiently critical of his sources. But there seems no reason to doubt his intention, which was to tell the truth as he knew it. He was not writing in a vacuum. Others – Luke says 'many' – had put in writing the verbal accounts of living 'eyewitnesses'. Luke was not in a position to exercise his imagination, since his record was subject to comparison with others, whose sources overlapped. Nor, indeed, could the original eyewitnesses themselves invent prodigies, for they too did not give their accounts in a vacuum: there were many of them who had seen and heard Jesus. Their accounts might not, and plainly did not, tally on all things: but they were witnesses to actual events, and the material they transmitted verbally thus suffered from no more than the inevitable distortions and contradictions which always accumulate around happenings which many see and recount.

Of course it is precisely the job of scholars to sort through evidence which comes to us by such means, and to evaluate texts based on traditional information. No texts have been studied more intensively and repeatedly, and by so many fine, trained minds, as the four Gospels – not just for the last 200 years of modern scholarship but for the best part of two millennia. But there is a limit to the fresh illumination which can be shed merely by study of the linguistic and historical background, by analysis of the texts and by induction, however brilliant. In New Testament scholarship, perhaps more so than in any other field of historical inquiry – though all are increasingly prone to it – there are fashionable truths and modish facts, as each new generation gets to grips with the same old texts and the same old problems they present. The wise outsider will not trouble himself too much with the current state of the scholarship game, but will concentrate on the wider picture.

There are two points to note about this wider picture. First, such new evidence as has come to light in our century, that is the Dead Sea Scrolls and the papyrus fragments of early New Testament writings, has tended to confirm the historicity of Jesus's life and ministry. The evidence we now have of religious beliefs and practices of Jewish sectarians around the time of Jesus and of John the Baptist makes their historical background much more solid and plausible than it seemed, say, in the early decades of this century. Few would now argue seriously that Jesus never existed. On the contrary, the story of his life and movement which the Gospels give us now seems part of a recognisable pattern which other sources confirm. As for the Gospels themselves, they have gained in evidential stature as the chronological gap between their first appearance in written form, and the events they describe, has steadily narrowed. None of this, of course, strengthens the evidence for Jesus's divinity and for the doctrines of the incarnation and resurrection – on the contrary, the placing of Jesus more firmly in a real historical context might be said to detract from his uniqueness – but it indicates that the tide of scholarship which once threatened to sweep him away completely as a historical personage has now turned, decisively. Jesus may not yet be restored as a God, but he lives again as a man.

The way in which, broadly speaking, New Testament scholarship in recent decades has tended to confirm the old traditional view is part of a much wider process which has rehabilitated tradition through a vast arc of ancient history. One might say that 19th-century scholarship devoted its energies to destroying the traditional view, and 20th-century scholarship to painfully reconstructing it. With hindsight and experience, modern scholars have learnt to treat tradition with a new respect and circumspection. Quite gone is the brash and, as it now seems, shallow rationalism and strident scepticism of the last century. Not many people in the 1850s, for instance, believed in Homeric Troy and Greece, though Homer described it all in wonderfully concrete detail, and his successors in classical Greece accepted his work as poetic tradition founded on historical truth. It was all, the *bien-pensant* Victorians were told, a complete fantasy; such an age had never been. Mr Gladstone was one of the few who believed in Homer's Troy, and how right he was! Today, in the 1970s, the whole Mycenaean Age stands forth for us in all its solidity. With allowances for anachronisms, the Homeric texts have been corroborated at almost every point. Priam's Troy, or Nestor's Pylos, or Agamemnon's Mycenae – 'rich in gold,' as indeed it was – can now be visited by any tourist, no longer cloud-capped palaces but real piles of stone.

Many other shadowy shapes of antiquity are now taking on substance. Imhotep, the earlier Egyptian incarnation of the Greek Asclepius, is now a real man at last: we may soon find his actual tomb at Sakkara. [illegible] the other week, the Greeks stumbled

Roger Woddis

All Ye Faithful

The Christmas staging of *The Sound of Music* at Kilkeel High School, Co. Down, has been called by Mr Paisley's party 'a severe threat to the Protestant heritage'.

Kilkeel is alive
To the sound of conflict;
They gnash their teeth
As they kneel to pray.
Sustained by belief,
Pious men are cursing
A novice nun
In a Christmas play.

Though times are ecumenical,
Uniting parson and priest,
The loving-cup is arsenical
At the annual feast.

In brotherly love
They are bound together,
In a common faith
They have found their way.
Their hearts are alive
To the sound of singing,
Except, of course,
On Christmas Day

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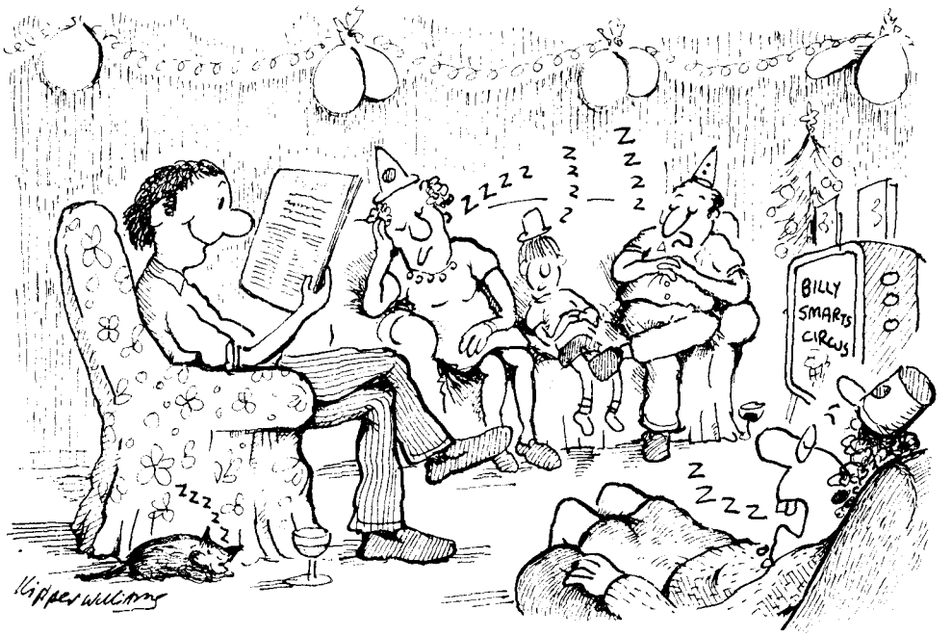
across the burial place of Philip of Macedon, in a spot indicated by traditional sources: perhaps we shall find Alexander's yet. A hundred years ago, the traditional presentation of Solomon in the historical section of the Old Testament, seemed a vulnerable structure. How much has since been confirmed and elaborated by the excavation of his work at Jerusalem and his great chariot-fortress at Megiddo! Archaeology has, indeed, served to authenticate episode after episode in traditional Jewish history. A vanished world has, as it were, arisen from the earth, to confront the jeering sceptics with the essential truth of those ancestral voices. Historians tend to be, and rightly so, somewhat more humble people in consequence, less inclined to condemn tradition out of hand and more willing to concede to earlier mentalities a respect for essential truth, and a desire to pass it on, akin to their own.

Unless there is proof to the contrary, I think we should approach the New Testament in this spirit, and not least Luke's earnest, naïve and touching account of the first Christmas. We might also bear in mind the important link between truth in religion and truth in art. Countless artists have seen in the Nativity a truth which is not to be confirmed by mere parchment or papyrus or the archaeologist's spade. It used to be a commonplace that the earliest depictions of the Virgin and Child were inspired by pre-Christian images of Isis and Horus, thus demonstrating the recurrence of myths unanchored in any historical facts. But we are now inclined to dismiss the connection and, on the contrary, to seek for an explanation in actual historical events, in the 4th millennium BC, of the Isis-Osiris-Horus mythological cycle itself. Artistic truth, like tradition, can embody historical truth much more frequently than earlier generations of professional scholars were prepared to admit.

So we must beware of the brutal scepticism which strips down our beliefs almost for the sake of it – rather as the clumsier restorers of Old Masters remove not only the accretive layers of varnish but the actual surface of the paint beneath. I doubt myself whether religious belief can be separated from the whole imaginative and aesthetic faculty in man. Certainly, religion and art are very closely related. One German art historian has put it rather well: 'Art is religion's earthly sister, who also sanctifies us as religion does. And if we are so made that we can hearken to it, it exalts us and makes us happy.' The total triumph of agnosticism in religion could in time produce a total agnosticism in art – perhaps it is already happening – and a destruction of the happiness which art can still bring. All of us see that first Christmas as a picture, in the series of images created by generations of artists reworking an ancient tradition. The picture is imaginative, of course, but it is also in its way a window into ancient reality, composed of the verbal images fashioned by Luke in the closing decades of the 1st century AD. If we look through that window we have a kind of truth but if we reject it and pull down the blinds we have nothing.



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David Haworth

The Boredom Mountain

One of the pre-Christmas treats available to Common Market staff was to hear Roy Jenkins on the theme of 'My first presidential year'. Whereat one of his audience stood to ask why it was generally accepted that the European Community is a bore. The question was more interesting than Jenkins's response, for boredom is undeniably in excessive supply in these parts. Indeed, there are vast mountains of it which dwarf the butter surplus and beef intervention stocks. Ministers are desperate to reduce it, but only compound the problem, and the Commission has no new suggestions about how it can be dispelled. Boredom: the EEC has distributed it at cut rates to third countries, dumped it on the electorates, gives it free in daily hand-outs to journalists, and has even tried to spray it away with talk about the 'European ideal'; but none of this has worked. The Community institutions are so demoralised with the task they haven't even been able to create the sure-fire antidote of a crisis: there is a fear even *that* might be tedious . . . and then Jenkins unleashes a review of the past 12 months.

But the dead hand of familiarity with what he had to say is not his fault. The continuing economic crisis has had such a dire effect on the EEC that there is little he can do beyond holding the line – though it remains something of a mystery as to why, in these circumstances, he believes it timely to raise once again the question of economic and monetary union. Of all the outlandish, not to say yawn-making, subjects he could have chosen to make his own this is surely the worst. He made a painfully slow start, too. Early on he blundered with the portfolio he took as his own – press and information – and made matters worse with a televised question and answer session of comical ineptitude. His platitudes in those days were not even self-assured: but after a few morale-boosting trips abroad they now have the authentic resonance of a Euro-bore. He has groped his way to authority within the Commission itself, though as a team only half of it can be regarded as competent forward attackers. The rest are cavorting on the touch-lines, neither tackling the ball nor engaging the crowd.

What are these obscure creatures doing except adding to the pile of 400-odd Commission proposals the majority of which will not get the Council of Ministers' approval this side of Doomsday? If the Commission is to operate effectively before the strains of further enlargement are heaped on it, the organisation must be completely overhauled. Jenkins knows this and he is also aware there is little time to achieve it – three years at most. He must make it much more specific in the tasks it sets itself. If the broad strategies hymned by the original Six had any efficacy, they were savagely devalued by the last enlargement and should be stuffed for exhibition by the time the next one is upon us.

If the debilitating effect of economic and political events has been marked within the Commission, the same malaise is more clearly observed in the Council of Ministers and the thrice-yearly EEC summits. Your suspicions might have been aroused by the most recent one after which several premiers, including our own, went to self-deceiving lengths to 'talk up' the supposed success of this event. True, the summiteers enjoyed it. They nearly always do. However, they achieved nothing which their foreign ministers, given a fine day and a good lunch, could not have agreed at one of their routine and perhaps too frequent meetings. Why it should seem appropriate for government heads to bother with the minutiae of the EEC regional fund is a mystery only Giscard d'Estaing can explain. A man whose grasp of such technical detail is as imperfect as most of his colleagues on these occasions. There is some claimed value in the political chumminess of the summits. Probably there would be fewer bilateral talks like the Callaghan-Giscard encounter in London if the regular summit meetings didn't provide a chance for relationships to develop between EEC partners. This is all to the good, though not foreseen by the Treaty of Rome.

The habit of working together and of cooperation – particularly in external affairs – is becoming gradually stronger among the member states. Each seems to have tested the outer limits of what can be accomplished on a national basis and concluded that joint action in such talks as the UN Law of the Sea conference, the Belgrade security talks and the North-South dialogue is the preferable course. This should not be underestimated – it adds up to a cohesion of sorts – though falls far short of the closer political unity of which 'Europe' has been, and to a large extent remains, a victim of its own rhetoric.

For most of the past 20 years the EEC has fostered exaggerated expectations. This has been the Community's stock in trade, much of the jargon and many of their sentiments being borrowed from federalists. Lack of progress on a whole raft of policies is causing the EEC to make the same mistake again. Never mind what we cannot do now, the Commission says in effect, when direct elections are established the Community will truly come into its own. Not only will people begin once more (if they ever did) to identify with the EEC and its works, they will be able to bring a democratic influence to bear on all its institutions.

While this is theoretically true, it seems to me to be too optimistic. Nationalist, not to say regionalist, sentiments are appearing like mushrooms in the EEC garden, and it has yet to be shown that a supranational political body will arouse much interest or affection. Besides, there is something ludicrous in an organisation which is a road show dashing in alternate session from obscure Luxembourg to remote Strasbourg. What sort of Parliament is that? It is one of the EEC's silliest aspects, yet the Council of Ministers intends to prevent the assembly from settling where it should be – next door to the Commission. The important point about a directly elected Parliament will be its symbolic value rather than its practical effect. Nothing wrong with that, but such elections are not a panacea for the EEC's other troubles.

Neither is the Common Market's further expansion, though on this issue, too, the EEC is suffering from an excess of enthusiasm over prudence. Noble as it is for the EEC to see itself as a kind of guarantor of democracy in the three potential member states, the strain of this role will drastically slow down policy-making in the Commission and Council. Ministers seem cavalier about this on the one hand, and on the other are evidently afraid that an honest warning about the implications of enlargement would be misinterpreted in Athens, Lisbon and Madrid.

The effect is, therefore, rather weird. Using the language of Hallstein or Monnet, the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers is pursuing policies which would have given de Gaulle the greatest satisfaction. By the early Eighties the EEC will be fully confirmed in the Gaullist vision of *Europe des patries* because it will have no earthly organisational hope of being anything else. The tendencies are already there – most of the blame for this, rightly or wrongly, is put on the British – and the next enlargement (engorgement?) will make them a fundamental characteristic of the Community. If supranationalism was ever a realistic goal in the original Six, it can never be in the Twelve. I predict sovereignty will come back into fashion: what other style will suit members of an organisation which will have such an enormous agricultural bum? The Community is already unattractive enough in this respect and will soon look grotesque.

Ultimately it has yet to show that it is mature enough to become, as it were a 'civilian power', active in world affairs but not in Big Power games. It is one of the ironies of the EEC's position in the world that outsiders should still consider the Community to be politically and economically robust. It is not, but it will survive in some form its lack of unity and its inability to make decisions except on the most bread-and-butter issues. Perhaps, after all, this is the right level for the Community to operate and hence the boredom factor mentioned at the start. The Community has suffered from too much 'vision' in the past. I used to share it – still do to some extent – but now believe it is preferable to make do with the imperfect reality than to be moved by out-dated dreams.

After six years I am leaving the EEC, at any rate for the time being. It will be interesting to observe it from a Mid-West campus – a perspective, I would guess, rather like looking down the wrong end of a telescope. Hang on a minute: in Missouri have they even heard of the Common Market?

Brussels

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Alex Lyon*

Censorship and the Home Office

Immigration control is a way of controlling the number of people who settle in this country each year. It is also a way of safeguarding the community against the acts of visitors who may injure the community during their stay. But it should not be a means of preventing free expression of views which may be intolerable to the Home Secretary or the public at large. The general principle is so obvious that it would gain wide acceptance.

Recent decisions of the Home Secretary have nevertheless undermined the principle. He did not act without precedent. The Home Office has long taken the view that the public's respect for immigration control would be undermined if they allowed entry to people whose presence caused wide public reaction. But each wave of popular emotion and indignation carried out from our midst not only an unpleasant character but a bit of freedom.

During the period that I was at the Home Office, I tried to draw the line so that no one was denied access to the country, or citizenship of it, merely on the grounds that his views were unpopular. Freedom of speech must mean the right to say what the majority do not like, because you need no protection for the right to say what everyone wants to hear. Accordingly we admitted in the same month a former head of the KGB and a group of Nazis from Germany who were coming to celebrate Hitler's birthday. The first decision caused widespread public anger but no one heard of the second. In neither case was any harm done to our citizens. No doubt the supporters of communist secret police or fascist thugs rejoiced at their heroes but who else was persuaded by their presence? Certainly there was no injury to people or damage to property.

This attitude never really appealed to Home Office officials and towards the end of my period, they were beginning to win again. A communist front organisation wanted to organise a peace conference in England. Even though it was supported by many non-communist organisations here, the Home Office wanted to refuse entry to a number of well-known East European communists.

I was not able hold the line but my resistance resulted in one of those unholy compromises. They were not given their visas until it was too late for them to attend the conference. I still find it difficult to believe that appeals from such sources would have had any effect on British public opinion. Instead, if there had been no fuss about the visas, the newspapers would probably have carried no reports. But even if they had, are our people not entitled to consider views which they may find persuasive or repulsive?

The recent visit by some SS generals is a classic case. Who can really pretend that anybody is harmed by the debates on Nazi atrocities conducted either by these generals or Mr Irving? If their opponents had made no noise, neither book would have sold. But even if their views provoke loud resistance, is that any reason for the Home Secretary to keep them out? It can only be argued that he condones such views if he allows in some people with controversial views and not others. To be entirely consistent, the Home Office would have to set up an index of prohibited views but such a policy would be rightly condemned. In fact they have a much more pragmatic policy. If the newspapers or respectable opinion makes a stink, keep them out.

Last year it was the unpleasant Mr Thorsen who suffered the combined stings of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Home Secretary. This year it is the German generals. Next year it may be somebody you favour.

The distinction between danger to the state and intolerance of unpopular views is equally blurred in relation to applications for citizenship. At present aliens who wish to be British citizens must show they are of 'good character'. There is no objective standard of what is good and officials are quick to suggest that people whose beliefs are controversial would not be accepted as citizens. This applies not only to political views but to strong opinions on social or religious matters.

In 1967 the cabinet decided that mere membership of a fascist or communist party was not a ground for refusing citizenship. There had to be evidence of real subversive activity. The distinction is not always observed. On one occasion a man who wrote for, and distributed, the Socialist Workers' newspaper was refused. It is particularly difficult for South African emigrés who have participated in violence against the racialist regime there. I always ruled that to wish to remove a reactionary government at home by violence did not mean that you would use violence against the government here. No South African emigré has let me down and (Chief Adjudicator please note) neither has any Chilean revolutionary. But alas I did not always win and I fear the principle is now frequently overlooked.

In 1850 Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, refused to deport or arrest Karl Marx on the grounds that talking of regicide, so long as it was not against the Queen of England, was not illegal in this country. It is difficult not to question whether Karl Marx would be so lucky with the Home Office of today.

Alex Lyon, Labour MP for York, was Minister of State at the Home Office 1974-76.

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John Daniel

No-Hopers

The return to power of Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser will have brought little hope to Australian Aborigines or to those whites who have been fighting on their behalf during the past year. In spite of some pious opening words about 'bringing justice to all people' Fraser and his Liberal Party are not known for their liberal attitudes towards Australia's indigenous population.

This year has already seen two reactionary moves against the Aborigines. In Western Australia, where a Liberal Government also holds power, a hastily-drafted Bill, which was made public the day before it was pushed through, denied full voting rights to anyone unable to read or write English. This effectively excluded the majority of the state's 37,000 Aborigines who are illiterate. The Anglican Archbishop of Perth in Western Australia, Geoffrey Sambell, promptly denounced it. 'Australia is a racist country,' he said. 'We must continue fighting until the whole country cares about Aboriginals.'

The Electoral Act Amendment Bill (as the literary-test was called) was coupled with an even more vindictive act by the state of Queensland which closed community health centres for Aborigines on the grounds that they were being used to drum up support for the Opposition Labour Party. The Queensland Premier, Johannes Bjelke-Peterson, did not deny that the Aborigines had a right to vote but claimed on national television that the medical teams were persuading them to vote in a partisan way. So the centres which treat the blindness and eye-infections common among Aborigines were shut down until after the elections.

As a result of public protest, which included a 48-hour vigil outside Australia House in London at the beginning of this month, the Western Australian literacy-test has been repealed. But the recent trend towards reaction is clear, and earlier this year an independent tribunal in Perth investigating reports of ballot-rigging found that 97 Aborigines had been denied their right to vote.

The Aborigines live in conditions which make the block-houses of Soweto appear luxurious. Over the past two generations they have drifted off their territories down to the edge of the large cities where they live under bridges or trees or in 'humpies' – hessian and corrugated iron sheds. Often they have no permanent shelter at all but sleep on open ground covered with blankets. They are called 'fringe dwellers' and although many Australians still regard them as gypsies, they are a permanent feature of Australian urban life. Earlier this year police in Guildford, near Perth, launched a series of attacks aimed at dislodging the fringe-dwellers from their encampment. Aborigines were woken in the middle of the night and ordered to move on. They buried their blankets, returned later the next day and dug up the blankets to sleep in again that night. Finally the camp was burned down and the Aborigines were granted sanctuary around the local Anglican church.

The harrying continued and the Anglican Archbishop was prosecuted under the Health and Town Planning Acts and fined. The lack of guilt by the bulk of the white Australian population seems staggering for a country which appeared to be growing more sophisticated in the late Sixties. But even the usual tokenism is absent: unemployment is at 50 per cent, infant mortality is among the ten highest in the world; life expectancy is 20 years less than for Australian whites; alcoholism and epilepsy are common, and in Queensland, where the health-centres were closed, the medical team claimed there was the highest rate of blindness in the world. In Perth, the manager of the state's Housing Commission, pushed to the logical extreme, declared that rather than face up to the white backlash in providing houses for Aborigines in white areas he was prepared to let Aborigine babies die – a statement he later attempted to retract.

A small group of white supporters tried to confront the prejudices of suburban Australia by organising a campaign trail of Aborigines to Canberra this summer. The march, or hitch-hike, across 2,500 miles, included a 78-year-old grandmother and a number of alcoholics but it did eventually arrive at Canberra without, however, receiving any clear assurances from R. I. Viner, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, that the native reserves would not be invaded by mining companies in their search for uranium, nickel and iron ore. Bob Bropho, the Aboriginal leader, asked after the meeting: 'Why do the whites want this piece of land they call the reserves? Why do they want it now?'

The answer, as usual, is big money. A recent book, *The Black Resistance*, by Fergus Robinson and Barry York, describes the Aurukun Aborigines locked in conflict with a consortium trying to mine the bauxite reserves on territory traditionally held sacred by the Aurukun. Three companies – Billiton (Shell Oil), Pechiney (European) and Tipperary (US) – have started by building the largest air-strip in the southern hemisphere. The Aurukun invaded it armed with spears and rifles, and the conflict continues. But it is obvious who will win.

The alternative to guaranteeing Aboriginal rights to sacred lands and reserves is to provide for them within the big cities. But white Australians persistently refuse to acknowledge the existence of the original inhabitants of their country and seem even more remote from them than white South Africans from the blacks or US citizens from the American Indians. But Australia is a rich and underpopulated continent. Once again it is a case of equality having little to do with available resources and everything to do with who controls them.

Malcolm Hulke

Behind the Cement

'In the old days,' said the cookhouse correctional officer, 'should a guy go beserksville we moved in like a football pack. He got his lumps on the spot, maybe again when we dragged him to his cell.' As he talked 20 years' prison experience had him keep his eyes constantly on his dozen assistant cooks, half of them murderers. 'But now, when a resident gets difficult, we call in his friends. They talk him back to sense. They all call me by my first name nowadays. We might even train some of them to become real fancy chefs.'

Since the Attica débâcle of 1971 things aren't what they used to be in the New York State Correctional Department. Machine-gun towers still top penitentiary walls, but peripheral security permits a high degree of liberty within. The lobbies, corridors and yards had all the bustle of a busy railway terminus, unshepherded convicts going about their business in their smart olive-green uniforms (name tags of course, not numbers). In the workshops residents controlled the big machines that pounded out car number plates ('That's our own multi-million dollar industry'). Outside, crowds yelled at rival block teams playing softball (baseball with a non-lethal ball and lightweight plastic bats). In quiet corners groups watched big-screen TV sets. The indoor gym resounded to the grunts and groans of the bodybuilding enthusiasts, black and white male bodies attached to gleaming torture machines that turn everyone into a Mr Universe. In the education department a class was sitting a university examination conducted in Spanish. The cinema was showing *Last Tango in Paris*, the uncut version we free British were not allowed to see. My guide stopped a hurrying resident for introductions.

'An Englishman? Gee, I'd sure admire to talk with you. But I don't have time. Got a grievance committee meeting. One of the COs claims a resident was rude to him.'

'Make sure you know which way to vote,' said a CO.

'Up yours,' said the resident, playing poking the correctional officer in the stomach before hurrying off laughing.

'Doesn't know his own strength.' The CO rubbed his stomach, pretending pain. 'You observe we have a relationship with our residents, sir? And that we don't carry sticks no more? Mind you, we COs practice judo constantly, and that's one thing we never teach these guys.'

As well as grievance committees (three residents, three COs, and a chairperson

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from outside), an internal investigation unit monitors complaints. A convicted criminal is still a United States citizen with full constitutional rights. The post-Attica regime has doubled the number of black and hispanic correctional officers (all the sergeants I saw were Negro). Mail is no longer censored. Ten-minute weekly phone calls to family are encouraged. Visiting is four days per month from 9.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. (total, 22 hours; in Britain, around 30 minutes). Family visiting costs, including overnight motel rooms, may be defrayed by the state. Leave is granted for education, vocational training, special medical care and compassionate family matters (1 per cent abscond). Lock-up time is minimal. Cells may be decorated to taste. All have flush toilets and no one believed me about our practice of slopping out. Hot showers are any time (here, one bath a week). Outside volunteers come in to teach, counsel and to entertain.

'But with all this,' said the machine-shop instructor, 'gaol is dumb. Half these guys shouldn't be here. They're failures. They even failed at crime. It costs twelve thousand bucks a year to keep a man behind the cement. For the most of them, give them a week inside to taste the lack of liberty. Then give them a new suit, fifty bucks and a job. It's unemployment, see. That and the ghettoes.'

The officer who frisked me for concealed weapons took a harsher line. 'In the past five years crime has increased by 83 per cent. It's liberalism that's done it. A hit man gets caught, so he cops for second degree, which means a three-to-five bid. With parole, he's out polluting the sidewalks in fourteen lousy months. I'd burn them.'

Wayne, with 99 years plus life, would not be out ever again. He was an ordinary-looking little man, the last person you would notice on a busy New York sidewalk, as no doubt was the case with his 30 'contract' victims. 'I only ever knew the Big Apple, hate and greed. Coming here I have learned to accept Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful Saviour.' He, too, 'admired' to talk with an English visitor but had no time. He was off to attend a Bilalian speakers' class held in Arabic in the prison mosque. For believers in the gaol's minority religions the state also provided a church and a synagogue. 'Peace be with you, brother,' he said, clasping my hand. 'As-salaam alaykum.'

'The Bilalians are big in population in our pens,' said my guide. Though not a cynic he added, 'And it sure helps their funds since they stopped being exclusively black Muslims. Now they accept hispanics and just about anybody.'

The warden was jovially intrigued to find an Englishman being shown over his gaol. 'Probably the only Britisher we've had here since you people built the first gaol on this site to house our revolutionaries. You know,' he said, 'it's a gas this place. Here we are, a correctional facility full of desperadoes, smack in the middle of one of the most law-abiding, respectable little cities in the whole North East. And you know what keeps this town crime free – why you got to drive two hours to find a cathouse or a little gambling? Well, this is a Mafia family town. Any of my residents found wandering outside the cement would probably wind up in the Finger Lakes wearing concrete boots. Those Mafia mothers would like to do away with the gaol. They say it gives the town a bad name. But I reckon we're here to stay.'

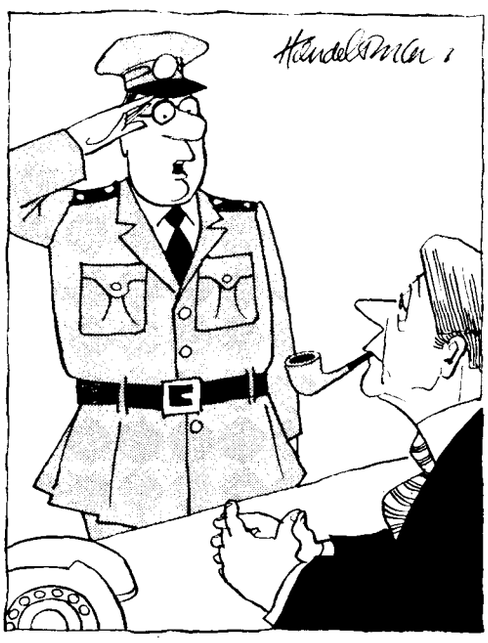
Anne Bennett

Alms Giving

I looked round furtively like you do prior to passing on a bit of gossip and whispered, 'Where's Mrs Potts?'; and this woman rose up majestically and said, 'I *am* Mrs Potts. What was it you wanted?' Oh God, I thought, unable to say, 'Is that right, her husband's carrying on with the assistant?' I said carefully, 'About Mrs Mills's teeth' – much to the surprise of Mrs Mills who's 90 if she is a day, and whom I'd advised not to bother that she made a whistling noise. I made a retreat back to the office.

'Mr Gillam,' said Robbie. 'no record.' He sat patiently in the reception room, got up when I came in and shook hands. He wasn't very tall, sparse brown hair and glasses, a Marks and Spencer type coat and muffler. I felt as though he had a loving wife who'd made sure he was well wrapped up. It turned out that he had been ill. 'I've had an operation on my throat,' he said, 'but I'm making a good recovery now. Another six months and I shall be back at work. I have this radium treatment once a week. Pulls you down a bit.' And he laughed in the way that the English do rather than say something is awful.

'I wouldn't bother you,' he said apologetically, 'I mean, all things considered, we manage quite well. I get a reasonable sickness pay from my job, I keep up my mortgage, there are many worse off than me. But I've got three boys and a friend said to come to you, that you can help perhaps with presents for Xmas. My wife, she said we wouldn't qualify but I wondered . . .'



'The spies have told us everything, Herr Schmidt. Can we now smuggle some guns into their cells?'

'Course you do,' I said: 'We get lots of presents given us. You let me have some details.' I wrote down ages and likes and dislikes. He had a nice face, I liked him. 'Ages seven, eight and ten. Wanted pistols, Action Man and kites.' I added them to the list. 'Gillam, Limes Avenue.' Two days later Audrey said: 'Here you are. Can you deliver them?'

It was a big parcel. I felt pleased. I drove round there on my way home. It was a street of little boxes, but then those who sing that song don't live in those houses. His wife answered the door. You couldn't swing a cat in the hall but it was bright and warm. I felt in a very Father Xmas-ish – better-to-give-than-receive-type – mood. 'The presents,' I said, 'for the boys.'

She looked delighted and quite excited. 'Oh bring them in,' she said. 'They've all gone out. Lucky, because he still believes, the youngest one. It's very good of you. Would you like a cup of tea?' 'Thank you,' I said. We sat in the kitchen. 'Let's look at them,' she said. We opened the parcel. They were books. All of the presents were books. A flat feeling came over both of us.

'They're not great readers?' I said.

She put a brave face on it. 'I'm always telling them,' she said, 'that they won't ever get anywhere if they don't read, but they will just look at comics though.'

'Damn and blast it,' I thought.

Next day I phoned the hospital. 'He's got cancer,' they said. 'He won't admit it, though. Try a cancer charity. A member of the household has to verify he has it,' they said.

'They won't,' I said.

'Well there it is,' they said matter-of-factly, 'someone has to. What do you want us to do? Muck up the system?' I could forge his signature, I mused. I do on the pension books. I'm marvellous on So-an-So, His Mark. Sometimes I give someone the wrong mark but no one ever notices.

There were two days to go. A notice lingered on on the notice board. Money still remained for distribution to one-parent families. 'How much?' I asked Anne. 'Fifteen pounds,' she said. 'I've got one,' I told her. 'Don't know the name,' she said. 'Just moved in,' I told her: 'Let me have it.' 'Okay,' she said.

I felt as if I'd won the pools. I couldn't wait to get round there. All paper decorations and a holly wreath on the door. I'd bought pistols and a kite and masses of comics. He answered the door. I dumped the parcels down. 'Can't stop, Mr Gillam,' I said, all in a rush. 'But this lot were for a one-parent family. But they moved. We didn't want them sitting in the office over Xmas. I thought of you.' 'Well, this *is* good,' he said: 'I'll write to the office and thank them.' 'No, no, don't do that,' I said, 'I'll pass your message on.'

Pity we can't just give alms, I thought. It would stop each charity vying with the next. I mean the SWP might find themselves giving to the Distressed Gentlefolk's Association. Wouldn't hurt, though, would it?

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London Diary

☐ So now we know exactly where we are, at the end of the year of the Great Nanny, who has celebrated her total dominion over us by a well-timed bulletin published by the Ministry of Health telling us when to wash (all over once a week) and where (the crotch 'fore and aft'; Nanny has a nautical turn of phrase and is, no doubt, one of Mr Heath's devoted readers). The new form of government which came stealing up on us with foolish laws about lashing ourselves into motor cars and cramming Sikhs into crash helmets, has now undertaken to look behind our collective ears. It will not be long before skateboards are banned, together with tobogganing down Hampstead Heath on tin trays, and we are all made to fill in a questionnaire about when we last *went*. I look forward to the next Queen's Speech containing her Government's proposals to make the non-wearing of Welly boots an indictable offence – after all colds are such a dreadful charge on the Health Service. So down the corridors of power Nanny stalks, rattling her starched cuffs and bearing her statutory bottle of cod liver oil.

☐ Those driving off for Christmas past Brixton or Wormwood Scrubs will probably give no thought to what goes on in such places. We still all want to put the thought of prisoners out of our minds, although hints that all is not well with our penal system sometimes reach the inside pages. The Lord Chancellor has asked for shorter sentences because of the appalling overcrowding in cells, the good people of Beacon Hill have turned down a proposal to have a hostel for the rehabilitation of offenders in their midst, and the Divisional Court has decided that the principles of natural justice do not apply to disciplinary proceedings in prisons. Most of those who have thought about the subject agree that, apart from a small minority of dangerous men, the great mass of foolish or inadequate characters who will be spending Christmas behind bars needn't be there, and no one now argues that a gaol sentence has any reformative value. No one in the Government seems to have the slightest interest in producing a more constructive or humane alternative to prison. Meanwhile the walls of Brixton are high and you will hardly notice it as you drive out on the way to Brighton.

☐ My suspicions, tentatively voiced last week, that your good old-fashioned SS man has now become a turn-on for youth and not a bogeyman have received alarming confirmation. Into a trendy drinking place in Covent Garden stepped a fashion conscious youth in full Nazi uniform: a girl who rose to protest was asked not to cause trouble. In this month's *Vogue* Hitler joins *Star Wars*, Donald Duck and Basil Brush among 'the biggest growth industries of the seventies', a new biography is a best seller in Europe and there is to be a rock musical entitled *Der Führer*. Oh for the happy days when the spoof Nazi spectacular in Mel Brooks's *The Producers*, with its theme song 'Springtime for Hitler and Germany', seemed a hilarious impossibility.

☐ Whether or not they are climbing into jackboots it's certain that the youth of England is taking a brisk turn to the Right. A number of visits to Oxford in the last few weeks have enabled me to report on its contemporary students. 'There was a time,' the head of one college said, almost with nostalgia, 'when if a man read PPE he was bound to be a revolutionary.' Now it seems the president of the students union is a Conservative, and at one debate a student regretted that the spread of literacy made censorship necessary so that undesirable books shouldn't fall into the hands of the working classes (admittedly I did discover that his father was a judge). I wonder what's happened to the old revolutionaries, just as I thought the other day of all those contributors to the schoolkids' *Oz*, those 13-year-old girls who wore T-shirts on which appeared the flushed face of the Detective Inspector in charge of the case (greatly to that officer's fury as he sat in court and saw his features distended over so many young bosoms in the public gallery). What's happened to the 12-year-old boy who carried a banner outside the Old Bailey bearing the legend: 'An orgasm a day keeps the doctor away'? They've probably all become chartered accountants. I have heard that one of the *Oz* editors is now doing very nicely out of Karate magazines.

☐ At a party this week, after finishing a series of television plays an actor of genius told me of a night when they had been filming late on the studio lot in pouring and icy rain. It was after midnight when a small group of high-ups crossed from the executive dining rooms to their waiting Daimlers and noticed some mysterious activity, arc lamps, and some very cold actors. 'What's going on?' the highest-up asked, to which his side-kick answered; 'I think they're doing one of our "fillers".' Of course that's what I've been writing, those quiet bits that go on between the commercials.

☐ This Christmas the crunch comes to the National Theatre, and the English people, having decreed its existence by an Act of Parliament, must now decide whether they really want this huge tourist attraction, and place of celebration of the art in which we are supreme, turned over to bingo. No one wants other Arts Council clients to suffer, everyone knows that the answer is for the Department of the Environment, or some other special source, to provide for the running of the building. The actors can do no more than play to near capacity audiences, and the time has come for the Noble Minister for the Arts to make a belated appearance upon the stage and actually say something.

☐ The news that Twickenham Studios has been taken over by an Arab tycoon called Mustapha Akkad promotes sad thoughts about the anonymous quality of a nation without a film industry. Who can doubt that it was the great days of Hollywood that made America into a world power, and promoted the extraordinary legend that Americans say sharp, short witty things as did the heroes of the Capra movies? Even in the darkest days of the Vietnam war it was clear that no nation that produced Henry Fonda could be wholly bad. We all knew that Frenchmen were earthy, honest people who made magnificent love in their vests, and walked round with a Gauloise stuck to their lower lips like Jean Gabin. All German girls sat astride chairs and had legs like Marlene Dietrich. When I first joined the film industry, in the days of the Crown Film Unit, the English were laconic heroes who drank tea when Jerry was directly overhead, and flew off in bombers to the music of Dr Vaughan Williams. Later we became a country of beautiful King's Road swingers. Be prepared for a new image. The next, and perhaps the last, British film is to be based on the life of the 12th-century Sultan of Syria who defeated Richard the Lionheart. Who will they get for Saladin – Stewart Granger?

☐ The most nightmarish Christmas story I have ever heard concerned a young man who went to stay with his girlfriend at her puritanical parents' home. On the first night he crept down the creaking passage, taking great care not to wake Mum and Dad, arrived undetected at his lady's bedroom and climbed between her sheets. All went well until, at the height of his passion, the door was flung open and father appeared wearing a false beard and carrying a loaded stocking. At the moment the whole business seems a nightmare to me, with bewildered crowds obediently thronging the shops in a panic that has lasted about two months. I shan't be rushing out to buy a last minute see-through acrylic screw-down nutcracker or hire a commissionaire to park my friends' cars as recommended in the Sunday papers. All any household needs at Christmas is a six-year-old child; having one I shall expect to start quite liking it all, after the shops are shut.

John Mortimer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard

☐ Anti-porn campaigners want to put the skids under a sex shop owner's scheme to sell skateboards. Anti-porn campaigner Lord Longford asked what he thought of the scheme said: 'What's a skateboard?' – *Sun* (T. Nicholson).

☐ Mrs Diane Evans, mother of three children and married for 17 years, called to her husband in the garden, 'I am getting a divorce', it was stated in the Family Division of the High Court yesterday. The husband replied: 'If I do not get these tomato plants in soon they will die.' – *The Times* (Mrs K. M. Taylor).

☐ Richard Hayward Foster, the son of a Jesus Man, was born at Brentwood, Essex, in 1903. He came up in 1922 and read history and law. We have been out of touch with him since he went down but have now learned from Malvern College that he died in December 1927. – *Jesus College Cambridge Society Report* for 1977 (David Shribman)

☐ Open university set of books for sale. D203, D283, D231, all half price. Wanted. Brass jam making pan. – Ad. in *St Albans Review & Express* (A. J. Robertson).

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C. H. Rolph

Suitable Thoughts

I've read many times that on the 12th day after Christmas the Queen goes to the altar of the Chapel Royal with offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh. This is because 6 January (Twelfth Night) is the day of the Feast of the Epiphany, a rather older festival than Christmas itself, commemorating the three main events by which 'Christ was made manifest' – the adoration of the magi, his baptism, and the water-into-wine miracle by which, years later at Cana in Galilee, his disciples were brought to full belief in their leader.

Christmas, then, should be a period of strict fasting, and I hope you will read on. Not until Epiphany and Twelfth Night should we start eating all this stuff, having suspended that kind of thing on 17 December, the beginning of a 21-day Advent season of non-merry-making. I have even seen it implausibly suggested that it is on this basis that the Post Office proclaims 17 December as the last day for posting inland Christmas cards, though the Post Office Users National Council probably sees this as an impious rationalisation. Anyone who wanted to ruin the Christmas trade, and it is regarded most balefully by those who most sustain it, could prove, from a wealth of authority far more impressive though less celebrated than Wenceslas and his pine-logs, that 25 December is St Stephen's Day and not Christ's. He could go on to establish that the day for exchanging neckties, socks, book tokens and hot water bottles is really 6 January. Indeed there are parts of Europe in which these things are given and received, in commemoration of the Magi and their frankincense, or myrrh, on 6 January rather than on what we call Christmas Day. And for centuries it was the practice even in this country (following the custom of the Nicene Council since A.D. 325) that the Archbishops on 6 January announced the date of the forthcoming Easter.

In short, all these dates have been confidently moved around with impunity by churchmen in the course of the past 1,700 years; and we have obediently closed the banks, stopped the trains, lain in bed or gone to church on days selected by a process of cloistered theological exegesis of which most of us know and understand even less than I do. If the church's edicts about feasts and fasts have always been fairly well observed, that is because the rich have kept the feasts and the poor have kept the fasts. It is probably why Benjamin Franklin held that 'a good conscience is a continual Christmas'; which, since a man must eat sometimes, would absolve him at least from fasting all through Advent into the New Year.

In fact Franklin enjoyed as much as anyone, according to his biographers, the giving and receiving of presents on Christmas morning. Come to that, it was another American aphorist, Elwyn Brooks White of 'Talk of the Town' in *New Yorker*, who called one of his books *Every Day is Saturday* and had much the same principle in mind. Every one of us has muttered against Christmas at some time or another, and when White was grumbling that 'to perceive Christmas through its wrapping becomes more difficult with every passing year', he was voicing the anguish that has always provoked the wrong words on Christmas mornings for nearly two millennia ('bedsocks *again*?').

In my family, where there is a nice diffidence about stating what you would like for Christmas, and much hypocritical delight upon getting the wrong things, we make little lists and leave them lying about. But we still feel that we ought really to study each other with greater assiduity, at least during the run-up to the 17th. Then after the 17th, even if we failed to begin the prescribed fast (and I can't remember seeing one begin), we should be in a position to judge the genuineness of each other's lists and what secret longings they concealed. It is startling to find two such uncompromising people as Goethe and George Eliot at variance about the moral economy of all this. Goethe: 'To give is the business of the rich.' George Eliot: 'One must be poor to know the luxury of giving.'

It is nearly 17 centuries since a Christmas Day when the Emperor Diocletian, who saw the Christians and their festivals as socially undesirable, discovered that they were celebrating the Nativity at a huge church gathering in Rome. At his orders the troops closed the church doors, set the building alight, burned all the worshippers to death, and probably for all time burned the idea of Christmas into the minds of men to whom the Christian faith meant, and still means, nothing. So a universal ambiance we still call Christmas, sustaining the vast flow of gifts and greetings between Jew and Moslem, crank and atheist, friend and foe, comes annually to delight the devout and the mindless, to puzzle the non-Christian and the misanthrope. So all over the world they give each other presents and even, in some places, stop killing each other. Accordingly, wrote Ogden Nash, in 'Merry Xmas nearly everybody?'

> People can't concentrate properly on
> blowing other
> People to pieces properly if their minds
> are poisoned
> By thoughts suitable to the 25th December.

Suitable thoughts, then, to any reader who has got thus far; and a happier New Year to all.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

And a Happy New Year

Along the floor of the charmingly wooded valley that lies below our demure little Devon village of Appleton there runs the river Teign on its winding way to the sea about ten miles distant. Thirty years ago, in the days when the country's railway enthusiasts had not yet had cause to twitch and flinch and foam at the mouth at the mention of the name Beeching, there ran beside the river, crossing it here and there, our single-track railway line. It went from Exeter southwards and westwards through beautiful country and it conducted those travellers who chose to board it en route, on and out into the wider spheres of Newton Abbot and, if you cared to change trains, the heady pleasures of Teignmouth. And vice versa, of course, back to the austerer joys of Exeter. There were, I think, four trains a day and half a dozen paying passengers on each was pretty good going. 'Myrtlebank' was not in those days as richly treed as now and there was a vantage point, just to the right of my arums, from which the train, gallantly puffing, could be seen making its sedate progress through the water meadows below. With the wind in the right direction, a distant whistle was to be heard, alerting station masters (oh yes, they existed) along the line and bringing them hurrying from their vegetable gardens. Their official duties were scarcely onerous but it was agreeable to have a stimulating chat with the driver and garner exciting information from the great world beyond the valley ('What price be cukes in Newton Abbot market?').

Once there was a tremendous excitement. An unprecedented rain-fall had caused a landslide on the main line and blocked it. Alternative arrangements had therefore to be made for the next twenty-four hours and what should come chugging along our track but the Cornish Riviera express itself, the Great Western prestige train of all time. The news of its impending arrival spread rapidly through the village and we all hastened down the 1½ miles to Appleton Station to have a peep at it. It wisely abandoned for the day its 'express' role (indeed, there was some doubt as to whether the vast engine could negotiate our sharpish curves) and it proceeded past us at about 15 m.p.h. and in a manner that can only be described as haughty. The passengers, looking disdainful and clearly wondering where on earth they had got to, peered scornfully out at us from the train's windows. It was the tumbrilled aristos and the peasants all over again. We cheered them politely but they just raised their noses higher and buried their faces in the *Tatler* and *Country Life*.

The line gave up the ghost long before Lord Beeching started laying about him. Giant river floods swept away one of the railway bridges to the south of Appleton, and the authorities, gazing at the damage, decided to let it go at that. But the track that leads north east to Exeter still exists, minus a rail or two here and there, I dare say, but such things are speedily replaceable and I am therefore wondering how British Rail, to whom I have written, will react to my challenging suggestion that we should, as a Christmas treat, have Mr Heath shunted down to us for Boxing Day or Christmas Eve, whichever fits in best with his tight schedule. The Appleton sidings are still there and would easily accommodate the gleaming luxi-carriages that facilitate his book-selling, record-hawking progress (they contain deep blue armchairs, I note, and also smoked salmon, a nutritious viand that I can only hope is within the permitted Heath calorie-count, though I rather doubt it). Our impressive station buildings still stand and it would be the work of a moment to set up a Hammond organ in the waiting-room, on which our hero, who seems to be looking increasingly like Nelson Eddy, could thunder away and lead us in carols. Perhaps, as the train draws in, he could rattle down a window and sing to us, prettily framed, while the train is actually in motion, just like Jeannette MacDonald (known in Hollywood as 'the iron butterfly') did with the song 'Beyond the Blue Horizon' in the film *Monte Carlo*. Anyway it's all a thrilling possibility, and the Bultitudes, who don't want to miss it, are even considering abandoning their customary winter sports trip to Gurglehausen, or that's what it always sounds like.

At all events, how delightfully enterprising of Mr Heath, and what a splendid apostle of Tory goodwill he makes, flashing along the shining lines, biro and smiles ever at the ready, with an assured place in *The Guinness Book of Records* as the very first commercial travelling ex-Prime Minister. But elsewhere things are not perhaps quite so rosy. Though quite tremendously (I expect you've already spotted it) right-wing, and permanently astonished at being allowed to appear at all in these hallowed red pages, I am not, I must confess, always too totally happy about our leadership. Mrs Thatcher seems to be, for one thing, so seldom *here*. Puck isn't in it. She puts her girdle round the earth in ten minutes flat, though 'flat' hardly describes the animation of her frequent appearances overseas, brought to us in glorious colour by the telly. Has anybody ever smiled so prettily, nodded so knowingly, queried so questioningly, even when, as so often, safety-helmeted and zooming pluckily down a mine-shaft? And to what fine future purpose is all this, I ask myself?

However, with Christmas upon us, away with such perplexing political thoughts and let us direct our minds to whatever pleasant surprises dear old Santa has in store for us (how sadly typical of the Dutch, such a difficult race at the best of times, to want to be different at all costs and to refer to him as Kriss Kringle). My Cousin Madge, a keen shopper whatever the season, has made two lightning dashes by bus into Exeter and can now barely be seen for assorted coloured wrapping paper and Sellotape and string and ribbon (Appleton is fully 'into' gift wrapping). The Bultitudes' elaborate 'personalised' Christmas card, specially printed at heaven knows what cost, has arrived ('Cordially yours, Giles and Bunty') and has irritated almost everybody. Miss Entwhistle, the soul of kindness and hospitality, is said to have been experimenting with hot punch for visitors and has already rendered four child carol singers (two hurried verses of 'Good King Wenceslas' and then ring the bell) almost insensible with alcohol.

Plans for the 'Over-75s' Yuletide Feast are well ahead (it was to have been the 'Over-70s' but their number was found to be too excessive for the capacities of the village hall – a real feather in the cap of the National Health Service) and should there be a wintry cold snap, here's a handy hint for the elderly and others. I am reliably informed that the body's maximum heat loss occurs through the head. So pop on a warmish hat indoors and never mind how dotty you look. This has an additional advantage. Uninvited, and almost certainly unwanted, chance callers at the house, heralded by that dread cry of 'Anybody at home?' from the garden path, will spot your headpiece and will invariably jump to the wrong conclusion ('Oh I see, you're just going out'). You'll be rid of them in two minutes.

The Christmas feast to which I have referred will be run and prepared and cooked and supervised by some of those splendid, large, solid and motherly women who flourish so abundantly in villages, and in Appleton we are greatly blessed in this respect. They only truly feel at home behind a large tea-pot. They man, if that be the verb, the Women's Institutes and Mothers' Unions, they deliver the meals on wheels ('And how are we today?'), they get up sales of work in aid of repairs to the hall and the ever vulnerable church roof (you'd think that the Maker would at least look after His property), they make cakes and jams, they visit the sick and they are ready to do any kind and useful deed. They are, thank goodness, imperishable. One generation of them gives birth to another and on and on they go. They have no truck with modern contraptions and they always seem, though heaven knows how, to have time on their hands. Not for them the electric joys of the Jiffywhirl Liquidiser, the flashing blades of the Kwick-Kut Mixer ('It slices 1½ tons of vegetables in 4 seconds'). Their choices for homely domestic activities in their kitchens are wooden spoons and large bowls and energy. Modern life has, fortunately, passed them by and the only coffee vending machine that they understand is a large smiling lady with a jug.

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Letters to the Editor

Streaming Spires

Sir, Tim Albert's scissors-and-paste piece on Oxbridge entrance (NS 9 December) is not up to your usual standards. Mr Albert read a letter in the *Times Educational Supplement* from a lady who once heard an Oxbridge head of house make a remark about the practice of his admissions tutors – what other institution would you be prepared to condemn on fourth-hand hearsay like this? What was surprising about the long and useful correspondence on this topic in the *TES* was the small number of straightforwardly anti-Oxbridge letters that the *TES* was able to print. What is depressing but not surprising about Mr Albert's article is that he chose to quote only from these.

I do not have the Cambridge figures to hand, but success rates at Oxford in 1977 were as follows: of men candidates from maintained schools, 46 per cent were admitted; of candidates from independent schools, 51 per cent and from direct grant schools, 52 per cent. The women's figures show less discrepancy, but even the men's figures hardly suggest the sort of gross bias Mr Albert is talking about. It is suggested, though (for instance in the *TES* editorial of 21 October), that state school candidates are going to find it increasingly difficult to win their places in open competition in future. If this is true, and I'm not entirely convinced that it is, and if Mr Albert is interested in finding out some of the reasons, he could do worse than start with some of the recent reports of the inspectorate – for example, the report on modern languages teaching in comprehensives, or on mixed ability teaching (reported this week). The *TES* report of 18 November on book-buying, or rather the failure to buy books, in state schools would be another good starting point.

None of us can look forward with anything but disgust to the possibility than an intellectual education might once more become the preserve of those rich enough to pay for it. But if this state of things came about, would it really be the Oxbridge colleges that were chiefly to blame?

CAROL CLARK

Balliol College
Oxford

Sir, Mr Milner (Letters 16 December) asks readers for 'any evidence of any injustice of which they have knowledge concerning the admissions procedure of the older universities', following Tim Albert's article on the supposed social bias in the Oxbridge selection system. They share the misconception that A-levels are somehow more objective than an entrance examination plus an interview and the belief that impersonality equals objectivity: A-level markers mark, for a fee, the *scripts* of people whom they will never meet; whereas those who administer the Oxbridge system have to construct an academic profile of an *individual* who may come to live and work amongst them. Moreover, the parents who beat their breasts about their few A-grade and S-level wonders not getting accepted should realise that A-levels are indices not 'qualifications'. It is rather like a performer who tells his audience that they have got to like him because the *New Faces* panel gave him 36 points out of 40 for 'presentation'.

As for Mr Milner's request for examples of injustices, I think it would be still more instructive to collect instances of working-class children from comprehensives with poor and non-existent A-levels who have been accepted by Oxbridge colleges. I am one of these cases and can recall how shocked I was in October 1966 to discover the number of semi-yobs like myself who were around at Oxford – people who, on the 'objective' criteria so beloved of Messrs Albert and Milner, would have been lucky to have scraped a Poly place. And while we are at it, what about another list of all the talentless swots we know of who gained brilliant A- and S-levels?

The serious and important point is that if we want to do anything about the fact that middle-class children do better at school and that middle-class schools produce better educated children then let us do it. Tinkering with selection systems is not only frivolous (and often self-interested) but dangerous, in that it raises false hopes of easy solutions to the desperately intractable problem of educational inequality.

JIM RUSSELL

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The Bakke Case

Sir, Sally Feldman must be puttting you on (Letters 9 December). Supporting the idea of 'reverse discrimination' in medical schools and elsewhere she writes: 'The very skills and qualifications now regarded as sacrosanct by our colleges and universities are themselves culturally biassed, devised by whites, suited to whites.' Does Miss Feldman really mean that there are special sorts of 'skills and and qualifications' suited to non-whites who wish to practise or train to practise medicine? Do scientific skills and methods change at racial frontiers? Should there be black qualifications for performing open heart surgery? Or Asian ones for writing prescriptions?

In any case does she not realise that the Bakke case was not about devising 'culturally unbiassed' admission programmes for black students. It was about devising lower standards for blacks. Special admission programmes designed to catch potential students – black, brown or white – from educationally and economically deprived backgrounds are admirable (and, incidentally nothing new). Racialist admission programmes are intolerable – and dangerous. Perhaps Miss Feldman could give us the logical difference between a programme which states that there are (statistically) too few blacks at the University of California medical school and one which says there are (statistically) too many Jews at the LSE, and a quota system must be devised to give WASPs a chance.

JOHN TORODE

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Sir, How strange are the ways in which words change their meaning. Until recently, 'discrimination' was a quality valued by the cultivated man, and 'indiscriminate' was a term of disapprobation. Formerly, to preserve neutrality (and grammatical propriety), one would discriminate 'between' or 'among', but now, it seems, one can discriminate (or, even, *be* discriminated) 'against'. The process continues with discrimination acquiring a mysterious vectorial quality, having both direction ('forward' and 'reverse') and algebraic sign ('positive' and 'negative'). Perhaps such perversion is the hallmark of the true social 'scientist'.

In proclaiming that all discrimination, whether forward or reverse, is immoral and not even temporarily tolerable, Antony Flew (Letters 9 December) takes altogether too simple a viewpoint, even within the limited context of the Bakke case. Non-random choice is the ratchet of evolutionary progress, whether biological or social. In a less-than-perfect world of limited resources and inherited injustice, the questions of what to choose, and how, are of central importance. The answers will often be painful or as they were, no doubt, for the woolly mammoth. But discrimination of some kind there must be.

I do not believe that the rights and wrongs of the Bakke case have yet been fully explored. Antony Flew's doctrinaire view, though excusing him from participation in more careful consideration of the problem, is certainly unlikely to lead to a just outcome. And I pray that both he and I will have retired from the groves of academe before university entrance ceases altogether to be discriminatory.

J. M. HAYNES

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In Begin's Court

Sir, May I briefly reflect on your editorial 'In Begin's Court' (NS 9 December)? You state: 'Yet the time has arrived when Israel's friends must tell her that conquest cannot bestow a lasting right to annexation or defence security a permanent argument for military occupation'. Legally this is nonsense. The fate of territories occupied in a defensive war is always decided, according to international customary law, by a peace treaty between the parties concerned. Until such a treaty has been signed there is no legal obligation to vacate any territory whatsoever. As far as I am aware this has always been the procedure except in the case of 'intransigent' Israel who ceded without a peace treaty in 1957 all of Sinai and in 1973 and 1975 the Abu Rhodeis oilfields and a substantial part of the militarily crucial Mitla Pass and part of the Golan Heights. The occupation of the areas, contrary to your assertions, are juridically entirely above board.

But Israel's main consideration is security, and if Israel thinks she jeopardises her future and her population's safety by withdrawing to the 1967 borders, she is entitled to refuse to do so. And having been victim of four aggressive wars, it would be very foolhardy indeed to agree to have along the most vital section of that tiny country a depth of 9-13 miles which would be the case if she withdraws to the borders of 1967.

I fully agree that President Sadat's praiseworthy and imaginative initiative should be appreciated by Israel and I have no doubt that it is. But this does not mean that because Egypt now, after a delay of 30 years is prepared to recognise her, she should helter-skelter jettison every safeguard, especially when the other Arab countries, by vehemently opposing Sadat and calling him a traitor, so clearly revealed that they are still intransigent and still not prepared to accept Israel's right to exist. The duty of the responsible press is to encourage and not hinder the peace-making process.

PAUL LAX

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This Week and Chile

Sir, Sheila Hayman astonishingly claims that Jonathan Dimbleby, after his first film on the Ethiopian famine, 'failed to report on what subsequently happened'. In fact, Jonathan Dimbleby has since returned to Ethiopia seven times to research stories for *This Week*. Four more programmes have been transmitted. No other current affairs programme has reported from Ethiopia at all. Indeed, 'Return to Ethiopia' performed precisely the function

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demanded by Sheila Hayman, exposing the responsibility of the Ethiopian government for the devastation caused by the famine.

In the same issue, your television critic Julian Barnes implied that Dimbleby carelessly endangered interviewees in our Chile film, and will ignore their fate. In fact *This Week* transmits every year a 'Review of the Year', in which we update films made during the previous 12 months. More importantly, whenever *This Week* interviews anyone who might endanger himself, the decision to identify such an interviewee is always made jointly with him, and after much consideration. This was absolutely the case in Chile. For the record – and contrary to your critic – it was not only trade unionists who agreed to be filmed facing the camera, and Hector Cuevas, of the Construction Workers, is the only one to have been arrested (along with many others not in the film). But then, the Chilean regime has never needed the excuse of a television programme to arrest trade unionists, any more than the IRA has needed an excuse to kill members of the security forces (which does not stop politicians accusing *This Week* of having caused the death of a prison officer who appeared in one of our films about Northern Ireland).

The seven brave people who appeared openly in our Chile film wanted their testimony seen and heard around the world – an opportunity denied them until *This Week*'s visit. If that was not obvious to your critic (and if he cannot be bothered to check facts), perhaps he should re-examine his own credentials before passing judgment on reporters like Dimbleby.

DAVID ELSTEIN
Producer, This Week

Thames Television
Euston Road
London NW1

JULIAN BARNES *writes*: I did not imply that Dimbleby 'carelessly endangered interviewees'; I asked how, and where, screening decisions are taken. It must be sharply comforting for those arrested in January to know that *This Week* may take up their case again at Christmas.

Hungary in 1956

Sir, Not since the days of late lamented Stalin have I seen so much silly rubbish and factual distortion squeezed in such small space as in Mr Arthur Nobes's letter on 'Hungary in 1956' (Letters 9 December).

He says, with heavy irony, that the wicked Soviets, with malice aforethought made an unprovoked attack on 'the lawful and democratic Hungarian Government'. That's exactly what they did, except that their previous agreement concluded with the Hungarians was still valid. A lawful and democratic government does not become less lawful or less democratic because Mr Nobes puts a phrase in quotation marks. Besides, even undemocratic governments should not be subjugated by foreign tanks. I am sure Mr Nobes would strongly disapprove any such attacks on the Soviet Union. Mr Nobes goes on to speak of excesses of the revolution because communist officials and ordinary members [of the CP, I presume] as well as the police were being attacked and murdered . . . This is uttterly untrue. No communist officials or CP members were even molested and the police – many of whom joined the revolution – were particularly popular. The only people who were attacked and hanged were members of the notorious AVO, the political police. Even this is, of course, regrettable. But the case is parallel with former concentration camp-prisoners attacking SS thugs and murderers.

Mr Nobes thinks that the Hungarian revolution would have turned fascist. The evidence? That 'there is not the slightest doubt in my mind'. This kind of argument can be answered fully by saying that there is not the slightest doubt in *my* mind that it would not. But this is not the point. Has the Soviet Union the right to attack sovereign states because she disapproves of their form of government? Does this theory empower the United States to attack all countries near her frontier because there is no doubt in somebody's mind that they might turn communist?

The writer of that letter goes on to say that in trying to understand the Soviet Union he has tried to see things through Soviet eyes. Judging by the letter this needed no great effort. The Soviet Union was afraid – he thinks – that Hungary might become an anti-Soviet nuclear base. Even Khrushchev failed to go quite as far as that when attempting a feeble justification for his ruthlessness and treachery. Imre Nagy's last act was to declare Hungarian neutrality. This act was no provocation as some commentators suggested – but an act of conciliation: a declaration and assurance that Hungary would become a second Austria, a part of no power-bloc and no threat to the Soviet Union.

The truth remains – and we might as well forget about quotation marks – that the Soviet Union, with malice aforethought, made a wicked and unprovoked attack on the lawful and democratic government of Hungary in 1956 and another wicked and unprovoked attack on Czechoslovakia 12 years later. Who's next?

GEORGE MIKES

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The Deferential Union

Sir, Will somebody please tell Patrick Wintour (NS 9 December), the Prime Minister, and anyone else who is under the illusion that 'all farmworkers now have security of tenure on their tied cottage', that the excellent legislation to that effect does not apply to Scotland? Much credit for the English and Welsh legislation must go to the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, which does not operate in Scotland. Scottish farmworkers have long since been gobbled up by the TGWU, which is ill-equipped to represent them. Indeed it was the TGWU which joined with the NFUS and the Scottish Landworkers Federation in submitting the preposterous view that the workers did not want security of tenure to an incredulous government. Under such weird circumstances legislation was impossible.

This should serve as a cautionary tale for anyone in the industry who envisages the NUAAW being assimilated into a general union. Rural workers need specialist and totally committed representation, and one hopes that the next general secretary of the NUAAW will take the aggressive steps necessary to extend the union's sphere into Scotland, and also into other rural industries. He might also ponder on the fact that the firemen's strike has, at least, achieved the acknowledgement that a skilled fireman will, eventually, be worth a skilled man's wage, while deferential tactics on the Agricultural Wages Board have achieved firstly an injurious award of £43, and secondly an insulting decision by the Government that £43 is excessive.

JOHN HOME ROBERTSON
Paxton South Mains
Berwick on Tweed

THE NS EDITORSHIP

Applications are invited for the post of Editor of the NEW STATESMAN. Anthony Howard, the present editor, has held the position for nearly six years, since May 1972, and is intending to leave in the spring of next year.

Applications from both men and women should be sent to the General Manager NEW STATESMAN, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ to arrive by 12 January 1978.

Untranscribability

Sir, The 'English empiricism' employed by Peter Conrad (NS 9 December) to demolish David Lodge's *The Modes of Modern Writing* is frequently presented as a means of direct access to a truth undistorted by theory. Ideologically innocent, rooted in common sense, empiricism shuns jargon and rejects 'theoretical exhibitionism'. In reality, of course, critical practice is impossible without critical theory, however unconscious, and a critical language without jargon is simply the language of a critical practice which in no way challenges the prevailing critical orthodoxy. Common sense is no more than the conventional wisdom. A practice which claims to have no theoretical foundations is merely one based on assumptions which, because they are not formulated, are not subjected to scrutiny.

One of Mr Conrad's assumptions *is* formulated, however, and proves on examination very strange indeed. Apparently rejecting Professor Lodge's contention that novels are made of words, Mr Conrad alludes to Johnson's famous rebuttal of Berkeley and continues. 'There are things in fiction as solid and irreducible as the stone Johnson kicked, things that are not phantasms of language – Bloom's potato, the contents of Mrs Gamp's pocket, Crusoe's corn husks . . .' But fictional corn husks are not things, and even the most solidly empiricist critic would have difficulty in kicking Bloom's potato. Novels are linguistic constructs and a full understanding of how they work will require a critical practice based on firm, rigorous and explicit theory. David Lodge's stimulating book is not even the end of the beginning.

CATHERINE BELSEY
Department of English
University College, Cardiff

Proportional Question

Sir, Mr Christopher Mayhew (NS 9 December) believes in Europe and in proportional representation. Fair enough. But surely it is not too much of an intellectual leap for him to grasp that people can quite genuinely believe in the first but not the second.

The argument that the regional list alone could enable us to meet the target date of May or June 1978 was exploded in the Commons debate on 12 December. Under repeated pressure the Home Secretary refused to undertake that the Government would set aside the Scots and Welsh Bills in favour of the European Bill. Unless they did this we would not be ready on time, even with the regional list.

DOUGLAS HURD
House of Commons
London SW1

Stephen Phillips

Sir, I am working on a critical biography of the poet and dramatist, Stephen Phillips (1864-1915), and I would be most grateful if any of your readers could tell me of the whereabouts of any letters, diaries or biographical material.

RICHARD WHITTINGTON-EGAN
24 Malbrook Road
Putney
London SW15

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Christmas and New Year Supplement

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Russell Davies

Your Xmas ITV Guide to Xmas 1978

This year once again, we are told, ITV was beaten before the off in the annual Christmas ratings race with the BBC. But next year, with all ITV company licences up for renewal in mid-1979, they will be really trying. *I give you fair warning.*

9.30 Hi there, Xmas!

The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Harold Wilson, KG, says ''ow do, 'ow are yer?', welcoming you to Number Ten, Downing Street, for another spot of homely fun, bringing the people to the people. Among his guests are Lord James-Callaghan, Lord Michael-Foot, Lord Raincoat, Lord Concorde, Lord Electric-Blanket, Sir Sidney Vicious and Dame Angela Rippon.

10.0 Cartoon Time

The very, very best of Freaky the Wacky Ghost, Wacky Woodpecker, Rab'n Hood and his Wacky Men, The Wacky Family Rab'nson and It's Whacky World War I!

11.0 Oh no it's Selwyn College

Another hilarious day in the life of the accident-prone Cambridge seat of learning.

E. L. Rowse	Arthur Negus
F. R. Leavings	Reg Varney
George Steinway	Anton Diffring
Wittgenstein	Max Wall

11.30 Those Wonderful Wicky-Wacky Golden Days of the Hollywood Silent Screen Era Age

Bob Monkhouse brings you the very, very best of the fabulous knockabout fun from Hollywood's fun factories of these halcyon days of yore of long ago. Bob adds his hilarious comments to the fabulous knockabout antics of Charlie Chortle, Billy Bottle, Hodder & Stoughton, and Fatty Article.

1.0 News at One

Your newscasters are Kathy Kirby and Helen Shapiro.

1.30 This is Yur Leyfe

Who will be the victim this Yuletide? Ronald Biggs? President Tito? Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer? If it's you, it'll be no good hiding behind that Xmas turkey when Eamonn sticks his big book in your face.

2.0 Goo'bye Dubai

In this Xmas Big Match Special, Don Revie says farewell to a country he has come to love, but not quite as much as America, where they have grass. Revie takes up his new appointment next month as General Supremissimo to Cincinnati Cloggers.

A Sandemans/Camels/Pyramid Selling Co-production

2.30 Crassdoors

No room at the Crassdoors Motel for Joe Davidson and his heavily pregnant wife Mary. Will they bed down in a corner of the car park, where any passing ass can stare at them?

Joe Davidson	Michael Denison
Mary Davidson	Dulcie Gray
Amy Turtle	Dame Anna Neagle
Ox	Bernard Bresslaw
Ass	Nicholas Parsons

ATV Nutwork Production

3.0 The Xmas Muppet Show

with H.M. The Queen.

The Xmas message to the Commonwealth from the Muppets and their special guest.

3.30 Kerry Packer's Circus

All the effs and blinds of the sawdust ring in this spectacular and death-defying show before an invited audience at the Gough Whitlam Memorial Watchatorium, Dinnagong, South Australia. Your ringmaster is Sir Richie 'Parrot Face' Benaud, and among the acts are

The Chappelli Brothers
cross talk act
Lillee and Pascoe
they'll stoop to conk yer
The Great Grig
South African strongman – has lifted his weight in gold
Phil Bennett's British Lions
how did they get in?
The Kerry Dancers
those syncopating sycophants

By arrangement with U-La-It Portable Placid Pitches Ltd, Whoops-o Luminous Balls, Inc. Revie-lon Productions

5.0 Xmas Stars on Sunday on Monday

HIS HOLINESS THE POPE, BARBRA STREISAND, H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES and Michelle, ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN, RED RUM, TRUMAN CAPOTE, PAM AYRES, MUHAMMAD ALI
with
ARS MUSICA de GANTS HILL
THE HAROLD EVANS HARMONICA CHORALE, THE BEATLES
Introduced by **John Wayne**

A special Xmas selection of your favourite Xmas carols and readings from the Xmas classics, including Dickens's 'Scrooge', Dorothy L. Sayers's 'Dial M for Manger', 'The Bible' and 'Jaws'.

6.0 Charlie's Xmas Angels

The tempting trio don red cloaks and white beards this week, impersonating Santa Claus in order to foil a mad tiny tot who is attempting to plant a nuclear device in a Reno department store. It's throb, throb, throb as the titanic threesome rise to their most bizarre assignment so far.

7.0 Coronation Street

No room at the Rovers for Joe Davidson and his very heavily pregnant and car-sick wife Mary. Who will put them up – or must they bed down on the wood shavings in Len Fairclough's yard? Who are the mysterious shepherds squatting in Ken Barlow's front parlour? Stan Ogden buys a camel.

7.30 The Benny Hill Xmas Sextacular

Benny on his very breast form, with Linda Loveloose, Mitzi Titz, Avocada Pair, Carol Service and Ambrosia Cream-Rice.

8.30 It's a Bad, Bad, Bad, Bad Film

Stanley Pretzel's zany international comedy about the 1908 skateboard race from Victoria Falls to Bangkok.

H. G. Wells	Woody Allen
Theodore Roosevelt	Phil Silvers
Lily Langtry	Marty Feldman
Sigmund Freud	Spike Milligan
Archduke Sergio de la Cruz Blanchard von Chaliapin	Peter Ustinov

10.30 Xmas Wrestling

from the Bolton Grappledrome. Your commentator is Mapleleaf Wragg at another gut-bustin' grunt'n'groan tourney, featuring the following all-star smash fabulous bouts: Bloody Hitachi (filthy Japanese cheat) v. Little Sir Ekco (mummy's boy from Penge). George Bleeder (patriotic East End meat porter) v. Don R. Kebab (Turkish ace). Galloping Inflation (unattached) v. The Unacceptable Face of Capitalism (loser to unmask).

11.0 A Prime Minister on Father Christmas

The Rt Hon Sir Harold Wilson, KG, in conversation with Anthony Howard, pays tribute to the founder of the Welfare State in this special Xmas Edition of his famous Fireside Chats.

FIRE BY GLO-LOG
SIR HAROLD'S WARDROBE BY C & A MODES
A Frostbite Inc. Production

1.0 Max Bygraves

says 'I wanna tell you another story'.

4.0 (approx.) Benediction

by the Chairperson of IBA, Dame Angela Rippon.

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Kingsley Amis

Business-Head and Carter-Face

Jake Richardson, 59, an Oxford historian domiciled in Orris Park, NW16, suffers among other things from loss of libido. The psychologist he consults prescribes certain forms of self-administered therapy.

It was almost with eagerness that Jake embarked on his programme of inceptive regrouping. A kind of savour attached to the official, by-order-in-council doing of things often thought inappropriate, even unseemly, in those past their first youth. To the idea of doing them, at least. Sneaking off on the quiet with some pictorial pornographic material would be like old times.

Once a keen buyer of tit-magazines, he realised as he left the house that morning that he hadn't even glanced at one for what felt like about three years but was probably a bit more. He did know, though, that the old order, of Venus Films Ltd and Visart Dept 100, of *Kamera, Pagan, Zoom, QT* and *Solo* no. 3 (featuring Rosa Domaille) sold alongside science fiction in the little shop in Newport Court, had yielded place to the open and widespread sale of large glossy journals that went further and also elsewhere, in the sense that they included supposedly serious or at least non-ruttish short stories and articles on probably cars and clothes. However widespread their sale could hardly be universal; better make for the Blake Street end of Orris Park, by tradition the cheaper and nastier end. At first glance this was not apparent: the buildings were no grimier, the proportion of derelict shops with corrugated iron in the window-frames no higher, the amount and variety of litter underfoot no greater. Then he saw the hand-done poster on the door of the Duke of Marlborough – Pub Live Family Entertainment with Bridie on drums, The Cowboy Himself, Mick on Duovox – and reflected that not all distinctions had been effaced.

The shop was on a corner next to a place with a lot of corroded refrigerators and rusty gas and electric cookers on the pavement outside it. Jake pretended to peer at one of these while he spied out the land. Confectionery counter – kids' toys and things – greeting-card stand – the stuff. In he went and started trying not to read what it said on the cards and looking the stuff over. Not easy: it was arranged in an overlapping row so that only the one at the end was fully visible. In Newport Court, under the headmistressy yet motherly eye of the white-coated lady in charge, limited browsing had been the rule, half-a-crown's worth of purchase per five or six minutes. Here there were no other customers to give guidance, though some was provided by the look of the bloke behind the confectionery, just the kind of squat bald 40-year-old to jump at the chance of asking Jake menacingly if he could help him. So one fell swoop would have to do it. *Mezzanine* – hadn't they seized a couple of issues of that in Australia recently? The rest of the lettering wasn't encouraging: The Gay Lib Game, Through the Insurance Maze, Exclusive – Britain's Secret Police Network. The picture was different. It showed a girl with the kind of angular good looks that suggested a sound business head and the kind of clothes, though in some disarray, that real girls wore. In one hand she held a tipped cigarette, but what counted for much more, especially on a cover, was where the other wasn't quite. One, thought Jake. Further along he caught sight of the fragment *sington* and took it to be part of *Kensington*, the name of a periodical recently described by its proprietor (in what connection Jake had forgotten) as entirely educational in character. Two. Directly to the side he caught a glimpse of half an outsize bare breast and decided that had better be three and the lot before the bald bugger asked him if he wasn't tiring his eyes with all that reading.

As it turned out he had been hard on this man, who politely didn't smile or leer when he saw Jake's selection, named a cash sum once and said Cheers five times, the first time when he noticed the approach of his customer, again when handed the magazines, again when he took the money, again when he gave change and the last time when bidden good-bye. Better than arseholes to you, thought Jake.

He set off for home with quite a spring in his step. Dirty girls approached and passed him, overtook him, moved across his front. When he observed this it occurred to him to take stock of them and so lend some background and depth to the study he would shortly be making of the relevant portions of *Mezzanine, Kensington* and whatever the other one was called – he hadn't liked to look and was carrying the things rolled up and back outwards. So, as the creatures cruised about him on the split and loosened paving-stones, advanced and receded between skips of rubble at the kerb and fat black plastic bags full of rubbish against or near the shop-fronts, he took a bit of stock of them.

They differed from the ones he had used to know within quite a wide range and yet unmistakably, as a random bunch of passers-by in Prague would differ from the Brussels equivalent. Apart from their dirtiness, which was often no more extreme than a look of entire neglect as in a hermit or castaway, they tended to have in common not so much slimness as smallness of frame, smallness of feature that went with roundness of head, dark-blonde colouring and nothing to shout about in the way of tits, so much not so that the odd one here and there was probably a boy: anyhow, there were enough such to point to a large secret migration from (as it might have been) Schleswig-Holstein. The favoured attire suggested a lightning raid on the dressing-up chest or actual deprivation of clothing as normally thought of. They were wearing curtains, bedspreads, blankets, tablecloths, loose covers off armchairs and sofas. A sideboard-runner hung round one neck in the manner of a stole, a doubled-over loop of carpet round another in that of an academic hood. And somebody's fucking them, thought Jake.

The pageant continued unabated throughout the walk back to Burgess Avenue, so there had been no malign Blake Street influence at work. Perhaps there was one which embraced Orris Park in general and even, it could be, surrounding territories too; he must keep his eyes open on his travels and compare. Turning in at his gate he realised there was one thing shared by the whole crowd, the larger as well as the smaller, the ones in clothes no less than the ones in domestic textiles, the black and white and the khaki: they had all not looked at him.

Jake wielded his latchkey and opened the front door slowly, cautiously. As soon as he had created an aperture wide enough for it to do so, a human head came into view at the level of his knee and no more than a few inches from it. The eyes caught his and showed astonishment. He wanted to kick the head, which ascended and receded as part of a move from a crouching to a standing posture. It belonged to Mrs Sharp, the woman who came in three mornings a week to clean the house. He had told her about three-quarters of an hour earlier that he was going out for about three-quarters of an hour, so it was no more than natural that after about 40 minutes she should have settled down (as he now saw) to polish the brass frame round the mat immediately inside the front door, nor that astonishment should have visited her to find him of all people entering the house at such a time and by such a route. It was sensing enough of this that must have led him to open the door in the way he had.

He had had plenty of practice at that type of thing in the four years Mrs Sharp had been working here. A round-shouldered woman of about 40 with prominent but otherwise rather good teeth and a trick of murmuring indistinguishably in tones of self-reproach or mild alarm, she was always in the way, his way at least. On the stairs, on the thresholds of rooms, in the narrow bit of passage between the foot of the stairs and the kitchen door (especially there), dead in front of whichever part of whichever shelf held the book he wanted – always, always. She monitored his shits, managing to be on reconnaissance patrol past the lavatory door or standing patrol in sight of it whenever he went in and out; he couldn't have said why he minded this as he did. Keeping at him in this way meant so much to her that she took 10p an hour less than the going rate and so, in these thin times, rendered herself virtually unsackable.

(continued overleaf)

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On his entry she had flattened herself against the wall to allow him, and any 20-stone friends he might have brought with him, to pass. He got out of range of her, so that if she fell over at this point she wouldn't be able to knock the magazines out of his hand in the process, and said weightily,

'I'm going up to my study now, Mrs Sharp.'

'Yes, Mr Richardson.'

'I've got some very important work to do.'

'Yes, Mr Richardson.'

'I don't want to be disturbed for the next hour.'

'No, Mr Richardson.'

Somebody who knew her less well than he did might have thought that this would put ideas into her head. Perhaps, but they would have come of their own accord, born of that mysterious power of *unconsciously* sensing how and when and where to be obstructive and acting on it. He had said what he had said merely to forearm himself against however she might rise to her forthcoming opportunity, for rise to it she would: the readiness was all. The same somebody as before might have deferred matters till the afternoon or next day: no good: she would have stayed on to make up for hours not worked last week, come tomorrow so as not to have to come on Friday when her daughter, etc. *And* he was fucked if he was going to, etc.

As he went upstairs he sang under his breath a ditty learned in his Army days:

Get older this . . .
Get older that . . .
When there isn't a girl about
Yer feel so lonely,
When there isn't a girl about
Yer on yer only . . .
Get older this (bash! bash!)
Get older that (boom! boom!)

It certainly didn't take him back. Locking himself in with a load of new-bought wankery, on the other hand, did, as predicted, but the distance was far smaller in the second case. He settled down comfortably in his handsome brass-studded red-leather armchair and opened *Kensington*.

After looking through it at colour-supplement speed he put it aside. It was full of chaps and parts of chaps, or rather of course it was full of girls but with chaps very much in the picture. *Zoom* and its contemporaries had occasionally introduced the odd chap dressed as a policeman or rustic, only he had been dressed, and the point of him had been the mistaken though innocuous one of something like comic relief, and you could usually get rid of him or most of him by folding the page. No amount of ingenuity would have got rid of the chaps here.

The journal he had picked up in the shop almost at random turned out to be called *Agora*, and the breast he had spied on its cover turned out to be part of a drawing, more precisely part of a drawing-within-a-drawing that a chap in the outer drawing was drawing. He was the only visible chap throughout *Agora*, but there were dozens of his kind in the letterpress of which, apart from small or smallish advertisements and some more non-erotic drawings, it entirely consisted. The range was from she ran her dainty fingers up and down my, by way of the other night my girl-friend took hold of my, to can anything be done to straighten out my. Some of it wasn't supposed to be true and some of it was.

Lastly and with renewed expectation he came to *Mezzanine*. It was about the size of the Liverpool telephone directory but was printed on much nicer paper. As part of the fun-delaying ritual that was itself part of the fun, he began at the beginning. Car. Cigarette. Soft drink. Hard drink. Mezzanine Platform – this was some more on the lines of said she'd never seen anything like my. Cigarette. Car. Article on speedboats. Article on Loire wines. He was over halfway through this, finding it sound enough if rather jocosely written, when he so to speak remembered where he was. Guiltily he flipped over the page and came upon a small photograph and a large photograph, both a bit misty on purpose, of a very pretty girl who at the same time looked like President Carter, in the sense that her face looked like his face, and who had almost no clothes on without giving much away. Over the next page, three more photographs, arty angles, unlikely poses. Over the *next* page, well this is it folks. Wham. And (there being two such) bam. And thank you most awfully mam.

Jake stared, though not in amazement. Tit- was not what this magazine was. In one sense he was on very familiar territory, even if the familiarity was slightly dated; in another he'd never been here before. His mind searched slowly. It was all a matter of how you looked at it, in two senses again if not more. In itself it was a bit . . . And for some reason you found you had to consider it in itself, even though most of the rest of her was there, including her face. In itself it had an exotic appearance, like the inside of a giraffe's ear or a tropical fruit not much prized even by the locals. He turned on and found more of the same, on again and found more art, again and came to an article on hair-pieces. Men's. To put on their heads.

In the days of *Zoom* – when, that is, *Zoom*-style had been as far as you could easily, safely and not expensively go – he had believed that to come across, by some stupendous accident, one of his favourite *Zoom* girls, Anne Austin, June Palmer or Rosa herself, in a pose such as he had just seen would have constituted the summit of human (or at least male) felicity. Well, *then* no doubt it would have done. That had been *then*.

He turned on yet again through various commemorations of the unfree good things in life until he came to the expected series of photographs with the girl on the cover as model. There was quite a lot of stuff alongside about her personal habits, including a clear statement in large letters and between quotation marks of what she regarded as the best thing in *her* life. Jake found this slightly offensive; her holding such a view was at least unobjectionable but he would have preferred on the whole to reach that conclusion about her off his own bat. In some of the accompanying pictorial pornographic material her hand was quite where it hadn't been quite on the cover and her mouth was open and her eyes shut. Right. Now that should have been just what the doctor ordered. Why wasn't it? What made it, to a very small degree but unmistakably, offputting? Before he could get his censor out of bed the thought popped up in his mind that she was no lady. By Gad sir, he said to himself, country's going to the dogs, time and place for everything, but without squashing that thought, which even attained the clarification that whereas what this girl was up to or at any rate was trying to be mistaken for being up to lay well within the scope of a lady, being so photographed didn't. But, he reminded himself, the girls in his fantasies got up to things that were much more, more – come on, out with it: more degrading than this. Yes, but that was him. And those girls did what they did because, however perversely, they enjoyed it, not because they were getting paid. He had imagined better than he knew when he credited this one with a sound business head. All rationalisation and self-deception, he said to himself; you wouldn't have thought of any of that *then*. Ah, but supposing it had been *then* that you . . .

Jake did a mental about-turn. He had decided that the only picture of business-head that he really liked was one of her shopping (fully clothed) in a vegetable-market and was about to junk the whole project when he remembered with a start what the flesh-and-blood doctor had ordered. Fifteen minutes had he said? Oh Christ. Well, knock off five for time already put in. He set himself to pore grimly over business-head and Carter-face in alternate bouts of two minutes each, fighting off as best he could the distractions of the possibly-Roman ring worn by the one, the pleasantness of the rural scene in which the other wallowed, the uncertainly-identifiable ornament or utensil in the shadows behind the one, and so on. After a while, this way or that he was getting interested. Then the dead silence was broken by a tremendous rattling of the lock on the door.

That fairly hurtled him back not far off 50 years. He went into a kind of throe and made wild self-defensive motions. 'What is it?' he asked. He had to ask most of it twice or more.

No answer, further rattling, but the door itself did seem to be holding for the moment.

'What do you want? Mrs Sharp?' This was louder and steadier.

'I thought your knob looked as if it could do with a polish.' No no, *of course* she didn't say that, couldn't have done; she must have been talking about th' door-knob or y' door-knob, but it had sort of come through to him different.

'Oh I see.'

'I can come back and finish it later if I'm disturbing you.'

'Yes do. No don't.' It would be anything from two to a hundred and two minutes later. 'No, finish it now you've started.'

'I can easily come back and finish it later.'

'No. No. Finish it now, Mrs Sharp.'

'Well . . . if that's what you really want, Mr Richardson.'

The buffeting resumed and went on for

This is an extract from Jake's Thing, *a new novel to be published next autumn by Hutchinson.*

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a minute or so, then stopped. Moving only his eyes, and them not much, Jake sat and waited for another half-minute. At the end of that time he executed a playful lunge, a feint. Instantly the buffeting re-resumed. He rocked triumphantly in his chair. 'Gotcha!' he hissed. 'Now try and tell me it's all imagination.'

But the funny part came when the polishing was well and truly over and he could go on where he had left off, or rather more or less where he had begun. As if acting on orders committed to memory and carried out many times in rehearsal he went to the top drawer of his desk, took out an unused long envelope, turned to the picture of Carter-face that he liked most of best, put the envelope so that it covered the less endearing part of her and went on from there.

Paul Theroux

The Imperial Ice-House

Of all the grand buildings on my island, the grandest by far was The Imperial Ice-House – white pillars and a shapely roof topped by ornate lettering on a gilded sign. Unlike the warehouses and the shops on the same street, it had no smell. It was whiter than the church, and though you would not mistake it for a church, the fresh paint and elongated windows – and the gold piping on the scrollwork of the sign – gave it at once a look of holiness and purpose. I cannot think of human endeavour without that building coming to mind, shimmering in my memory as it did on the island, the heat distorting it like its reflection in water.

The ice-house did more than cater to the comforts of the islanders. It provided ice for the fisherman's catch and the farmer's delicate produce. A famous Victorian novelist visited us in 1859 and remarked on it, describing it as 'a drinking shop'. It was certainly that, but it was more. It was 'well-attended' he said. He was merely passing through, a traveller interested in recording our eccentricities. He could not have known that The Imperial Ice-House was our chief claim to civilisation. Ice in that climate! It was shipped to the island whole, and preserved. It was our achievement and our boast.

Then one day, decades later, four men came to town for a wagon-load of ice. Three were black and had pretty names; the fourth was a white planter called Mr Hand. He had made the trip with his negroes because it was high summer and he wanted cold drinks. His plan was to carry away a ton of ice and store it in his estate up-country. He was a new man on the island and had the strengths and weaknesses peculiar to all new arrivals. He was hard-working and generous; he talked a good deal about progress; he wore his eagerness on his face. He looked stunned and happy and energetic. He did not listen or conceal. On this the most British of the islands it was a satisfaction to newcomers to see the Victoria Statue on Victoria Street, and the horses in Hyde Park, and Nelson in Trafalgar Square. Mr Hand saw no reason why he should not drink here as he had done in England.

He had taken over Martlet's estate, which had been up for sale ever since Martlet's death. That again revealed Mr Hand as a newcomer, considering what had happened to old Martlet. And the estate was as far from town as it was possible to be on this island: Mr Hand, a bachelor, must have needed consolation and encouragement.

He had, against all good advice, taken over the Martlet negroes, and three of these accompanied him on that trip to town for the ice. Mr Hand closed the deal at the ice-house by having a drink, and he sent a bucket of beer out to his men. They were called John Paul, Macacque and Jacket. He had another drink, and another, and sent out more beer for the men, who kept in the shade. It was not unlawful for Negro estate workers to drink in the daytime, but it was not the custom either. Even if he had known, Mr Hand probably would not have cared.

The negroes drank, conversing in whispers, shadows in shadow, accepting what they were offered, and waiting to be summoned to load the ice.

They had arrived in the coolness of early morning, but the drinking meant delay: by noon the wagon was still empty, the four horses still tethered to a tree, the negroes sitting with their backs to the ice-house and their long legs stretched out. Perhaps the racket from inside told them there would be no hurry. In any case, they expected to leave at dusk, for not even the rankest newcomer would risk hauling ice across the island in the mid-afternoon heat.

Just as they had begun to doze, they were called. Mr Hand stood and swayed on the verandah. He was ready, he yelled. He had to repeat it before his words were understood. Some other men came out of the ice-house and argued with him. Mr Hand took them over to the wagon and showed them the sheets of canvas he had brought. He urged the men to watch as the negroes swung the big wagon to the back door; and he supervised the loading, distributing sawdust between the great blocks of ice as if cementing for good the foundations of an imperial building.

For an hour or more the negroes laboured, two men to a cake, and Mr Hand joked to them about it: Had they known water to be so heavy? An enormous block was winched from the door. John Paul, who was the leader of the three, withdrew an ice-pick from his shirt and began to work its stiletto point on that block. There was a shout from Mr Hand – again, the unexpected voice – and John Paul stood and patiently wiped the ice-pick on his arm. When the block was loaded, the wheels were at a slant and the floor of the wagon had squashed the springs to such an extent that the planks rested on the axle-trees. Mr Hand continued to trowel the sawdust and separate the cakes with canvas until at last all the ice was loaded and the four horses hitched.

The news of the loading had reached the men drinking in the ice-house. A noisy crowd gathered on the verandah to watch the tipping wagon creak down Regent Street, Mr Hand holding the reins, Macacque and Jacket tugging the bridles of the forward horses, John Paul sauntering at the rear. Their progress was slow, and even before they disappeared past the tile kiln at the far end of the street many of the ice-house men had left the verandah to seek the cool bar.

Past the Wallace estate, and Villeneuve's dairy, the milestone at the flour mill; children had followed, but they too dropped back because of the heat. Others had watched from doorways, attracted by the size of the load and the rumble and wobble of the wheels in the rutted lanes. Now, no one followed.

There were no more houses. They had begun to climb the first range of hills. In this heat, on the exposed road, the birds were tiny and silent, and the flowers had no aroma. There was only a sawing of locusts and a smell of dust. From time to time, Jacket glimpsed the straining horse he held and looked over at Macacque, who frowned at the higher hills beyond.

The hills loomed; no one saw the hole in the road, only the toppling horses, the one behind Jacket's rearing from a broken trace and free of one strap swinging himself and snapping another. Empty, the wagon had seemed secure; but this weight, and the shock of the sudden hole made it shudder feebly and look as if it might burst. Jacket calmed the horse and quickly roped him. The others steadied the wagon.

Mr Hand, asleep on his seat, had tumbled to his knees. He woke and swore at the men, then at the horses, and he cursed the broken straps. But he had more straps in the chest he had brought, and he was so absorbed in the repair he did not leave the road. He mended the traces – spurning the men's help in the middle of the North Road, squinting in the sunshine.

They were soon on their way. There was a rime of froth on the necks and fetlocks of the horses, and great syrupy strings of yellow saliva dripped from their jaws. The road narrowed as it grew steep; then it opened again. The horses fought for footing and the wheels chimed as they banged against the wagon. The negroes did not sing as they had on the early-morning ride, nor did they speak. Mr Hand nodded, sat upright, slumped again and was asleep.

Sensing the wagon slowing, John Paul put his shoulder under the back flap and gave a push. His shoulder was soaked; the wagon had begun to drip, dark pennies in the dust that dried almost as soon as they fell. He placed his forearms on the flap and put his head down and let the wagon carry him.

Passing the spring where they had stopped that morning for a drink, John Paul called out to Mr Hand and asked if they could rest. No, said Mr Hand, waking again and

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spreading his fingers to push at the sunlight. They would go on, he said; they were in a hurry. Now Jacket sang out – a brief squawking ditty, interrupting the silence of the hot road. He was answered by John Paul, another bird-like cry, and then Macacque's affirming gabble. John Paul took his ice pick and reached beneath the canvas. He chopped a wedge, and sucked it, then shared it with the two other negroes. Mr Hand gasped in sleep.

There was a cracking, a splintering of wood like a limb twisting from a tree. John Paul tossed his chunk of ice into the grass by the roadside, and he saw the rear wheel in pieces, a bunch of spindles settling under wagon.

Glassy-eyed from his nap, Mr Hand announced to them that he had a spare wheel. He unbolted it from the bottom of the wagon and fitted it to the axle, but from where the others stood idle they could see that the ice had shifted and cracked the side boards. And yet, when the trip was resumed, the wagon rolled more smoothly, as if the load was lighter than before – the springs had bounce, the wheels were straighter.

More ice was chopped away by John Paul, and this he shared, and while Mr Hand slept the three negroes quarrelled silently, sniffing and sighing, because John Paul had the ice pick and he would not let any of the others use it.

The road became bumpy again, the ice moved in the wagon. It had been securely roped, but now it was loose; it was a smaller load; its jarring woke Mr Hand. He worked himself into a temper when he saw the diminishing load. He stopped to tighten the canvas around it and screamed at the puddle that collected under the wagon. He would not let the negroes drink. There will be cold drinks in plenty, he said, when he arrived home. Later, he got down from the seat on a steep grade and got behind and pushed with his shoulder like John Paul, and he said: That's how we do it.

They passed a fragrant valley. Negroes in that valley whispered and laughed and jeered at the negroes in this procession. Now the ice was melting so quickly there was a stream of water pouring from the wagon and its cracks. The mockery was loud and several negroes followed for some distance, yelling about the melting ice and the trail of mud they left through the pretty valley. The wagon wood was dark with moisture, as dark as the negroes' faces, which were streaming with sweat.

Mr Hand began to talk – crazy talk about England – and his men laughed at the pitch of his voice, which was a child's complaint. They did not understand his words; he ignored their laughter.

The left trace snapped as the right had done, a spoke worked loose and dropped from a wheel, although the wheel itself remained in position. One horse's shoes clanged as he kicked it into the belly of the wagon. These incidents were commented upon, and now the negroes talked loudly of the stupidity of the trip, the waste of effort, the wrong time of day, the colour of Mr Hand's cheeks. Mr Hand sat holding the reins loosely, his head tipped on to his shoulder. His straw hat fell off and the negroes left it on the road where it fell. John Paul looked back and saw his footprint crushed into the crown.

They had gained the second range of hills, and descending – slowly, so that the wagon would not be shot forward – the late-afternoon sun, unshielded by any living tree, struck their faces like metal. The road was strewn with boulders on which the horses did a tired dance, stepping back. There was a curve, another upward grade, and at that corner the horses paused to crop the grass.

There was no sound from Mr Hand. He was a crouching infant in his seat, in the sun's glare, his mouth open. The horses tore at the grass with their lips. The negroes crept under the wagon, and there they stayed in the coolness, for an hour or more, the cold water dripping on them.

Mr Hand woke, stamping his feet on the planks. They scrambled to their places.

His anger was exhausted in three shouts. He promised them ice, cold drinks, a share for everyone, and as he spoke the negroes could see how the ice beneath the sagging canvas was a quarter the size of what it had been. Divided, it would be nothing. They did not respond to Mr Hand's offer: it was a promise of water, which they had already as their right, from their own spring.

Mr Hand tugged the reins and the men helped the horses, dragged the wagon, dragged the ice, dragged this man through the tide of heat. Mr Hand chattered, repeating his promises, but when he saw the impassive faces of the negroes he menaced them with whining words. He spoke sharply, like an insect stirred by the sun.

If you don't pull hard, he said to the men, I'll free the horses and hitch you to the wagon – and you'll take us home. He thwacked the canvas with his whip. There was no thud, nothing solid, only a thin echoless smack, and he clawed open the canvas. Shrunken ice-blocks rattled on the planks.

He stopped the wagon and leaped out and faced each man in turn and accused him. The men did nothing; they waited for him to move. And he did. He hit Macacque and called him a thief. Jacket was lazy, he said, and he hit him. John Paul prepared himself for worse. Mr Hand came close to him and screamed and, as he did, the wagon lurched. The horses had found grass: they pulled the wagon to the roadside.

The sounds of the horses' chewing, the dripping of the wagon in the heat; it was regular, like time leaking away. Mr Hand raised his whip and rushed at John Paul. And then in that low sun, Mr Hand cast three shadows; two helped him aside, and he struggled until a sound came, the sound John Paul had made in town with his ice pick, like ice being chipped, or bone struck, and the hatless man cried out – plea, promise, threat, all at once – and staggered to the wagon and shouted at the water dripping into the dust. The ice was no larger than a man, and bleeding in the same way.

At last it was cool and dark and they were passing the first fences of the farm and turning in to the drive. There were lighted huts and lights moving towards them, swinging tamely on nothing in the darkness. Voices near those lanterns cried out – timid questions. The three men answered in triumph from the top of the heavy wagon, which rumbled in the road like a broken catafalque, streaming, still streaming, though all the ice was gone.

Jean Rhys

The Joey Bagstock Smile

September 7, 1974

When I left I knew that I should not see him alive again. And I thought of the way he'd smiled at me, triumphantly, mockingly. Why should a man look like that when he's dying? I knew that smile, but from where? Not from him. Then it was as if a voice said in my head, 'That's the Joey Bagstock smile.' And I remembered. Joey Bagstock was a minor character in a book by Charles Dickens I had read as a child. I'm not sure if he appears or is only spoken about. 'Joey Bagstock, he's tough old Joey, tough and devilish sly.'

Then came the day when I kissed his forehead and it was so cold. No smile now, but the marble face I knew so well. The hanging judge's face. God knows what would happen to me now. But one thing is certain and the rest is lies, the flower that once has bloomed forever dies. I was over forty when he asked me to marry him. I was so happy I could scarcely believe it. Then we married and things went wrong. It wasn't as I thought it would be.

I'm not one to whine like some women do. I hate the whining note that comes into their voices. I attack. Usually he never answered me, just looked at me with his marble face. But why should he have smiled like that in the last, so triumphantly? I think I must be going mad, for I see it everywhere, the Joey Bagstock smile. On men's faces, women's faces, even children's faces. I shut myself away as far as I can and I still see it. Only seen for a moment and recognised. It's the Joey Bagstock smile. 'He's tough old Joey, he's tough and devilish sly.'

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Three Poems by Craig Raine

A Martian Sends a Postcard Home

Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings
and some are treasured for their markings –

they cause the eyes to melt
or the body to shriek without pain.

I have never seen one fly, but
sometimes they perch on the hand.

Mist is when the sky is tired of flight
and rests its soft machine on ground:

then the world is dim and bookish
like engravings under tissue paper.

Rain is when the earth is television.
It has the property of making colours darker.

Model T is a room with the lock inside –
A key is turned to free the world

for movement, so quick there is a film
to watch for anything missed.

But time is tied to the wrist
or kept in a box, ticking with impatience.

In homes, a haunted apparatus sleeps,
that snores when you pick it up.

If the ghost cries, they carry it
to their lips and soothe it to sleep

with sounds. And yet, they wake it up
deliberately, by tickling with a finger.

Only the young are allowed to suffer
openly. Adults go to a punishment room

with water but nothing to eat.
They lock the door and suffer the noises

alone. No-one is exempt
and everyone's pain has a different smell.

At night, when all the colours die,
They hide in pairs

and read about themselves –
in colour, with their eyelids shut.

Karma

Rubbish smokes at the end of the garden,
cracking its knuckles to pass the time.

Appearances give up their ghosts today –
on the lawn, three blackbirds

play at grandmother's footsteps,
and a naughty wind has blown

the dress of each tulip
over its head. The figs fill out

to maharani harem pants
and the old pear tree,

pruned like a leper,
maladroitly drops its fruit.

For a moment, the eye is God –
setting a silver snail

to ring and rust for years
on a pair of ancient handlebars

(the saddle once growled as a dog).
The eye rewards and punishes –

poetic justice, calling up
a careless wind

to twitch undone
the careful turbans on the rosebush . . .

The Fair in St Giles

The showman's coat is frogged and braided
like a saxophone, his barker pregnant

with the drum: they are odder, really,
than their *Famous Collection of Cobras*

who rear like secondhand ladles . . .
At the shooting range, customers break

the rifles in two, nuzzle the stocks
like hungry cats and fire (miaow!)

at clay-pipe periscopes. The tin
is pock-marked as a Pakistani's cheek.

I tear at my mohair candyfloss and watch
a winner shake the vaccinated coconuts:

a wary man tees up the rest, sneaking
behind the tarpaulin like Polonius.

The dodgems bully-off and then subside
to the shambles of a cobbler's shop;

scissor-legged in jodhpurs,
riders smoke outside the Wall of Death;

the stripper crooks her knees in turn,
a bird's nest underneath each arm –

all things vivid as a dreamed adultery . . .
A man in black soliloquises,

denounces all our disappointment,
his nose a terrible thimble.

Craig Raine's first volume, The Onion, Memory, *is due from Oxford in May 1978.*
A selection of his poems will be included in Faber's Poetry Introduction 4.

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EDWARD PYGGE'S CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Right, out of that comfortable chair for a start. Stir your stumps, shake the holly out of your hair, fish the silver three-penny-bits out of your turn-ups. You're going to need your wits about you for the next half hour or so. A bit of running on the spot would be a good idea. A few star jumps? Some press-ups? Best of all would be a nice sharp cold shower – tone up all those tiny grey cells. No? You absolutely refuse? Well, get under a few of these questions instead. Who was cured of leprosy after seven good soakings in the Jordan? Who said, 'This is our finest shower'? Who always washed his hands with scented soap after meeting clients? Who washed their feet in soda water? Where was washing extra? Which Victorian painter washed his hair every morning in cold water and yellow soap, coming to the breakfast table with his head still dripping? Who said, Man does not live by soap alone? Where is the US Open Tennis Championship moving to? Who caught the Whigs bathing and walked away with their clothes? Who was caught bathing by a pair of apocryphal and perjurous elders? Who imagined that washing his hands would discolour the oceans? Who was stabbed in his bath in 1793? Who was stabbed in her shower by a motelier in 1960? Who played the French policeman in *Casablanca*? And what, for that matter, is Minnehaha doing in this section of the quiz? All right – worked them all out? That should have freshened you up a bit. Now for the real questions.

Seventy Seven

Who, this year:

1: Refused to travel even one miserable inch along the fearful road that leads to Auschwitz and Gulag?

2: Said, 'You could produce a book of Hitler's good ideas, and you would be quite amazed at how many he had'?

3: Obtained 'a wonderful opportunity to secure my family's future'?

4: Continued upward and at last completed his spiral ascent?

5: Was characterised in these pages as 'the only Colonel in the world who is married to another Colonel'?

6: Had his face described in these pages as 'a good adventure playground for young dermatologists'?

7: Revealed that he had made love to 10,000 different women in his life 'because I wanted to learn the truth'?

8: Revealed in the *Sunday People* her 'wild, wild affair' with Elvis Presley?

9: Wrote of Elvis Presley, 'that he himself never did or said anything remotely outrageous, significant or even interesting has only added to the purity of his myth'?

10: Wrote of Melvyn Bragg that 'few people would be more than just aware of his literary existence as a minor novelist and book reviewer if he had not conducted so many television book programmes on which so many silly books have so often been so trivially discussed'?

Lookalikes

1: Which novels open thus:

a) Call me Ishmael.

b) Call me, Ishmael. Feel absolutely free to.

c) All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

d) 'All happy families are more or less dissimilar; all unhappy ones are more or less alike', says a great Russian writer in the beginning of a famous novel.

2: Who spoke for England:

a) In 1939

b) In 1975

3: Connect Lakey. Dottie, Priss, Polly, Kay, Pokey, Libby and Helena with Edward Lucie-Smith, Peter Redgrove, Peter Porter, Philip Hobsbaum and George MacBeth.

4: Who added an *e* to the end of his name in the 1960s on the grounds that Dante, Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe and Blake all had names which ended in *e*?

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By Any Other?

1: Who sport these names:
a) The Golden Bear
b) The Giraffe
c) The Rabbi
d) Supermouth
e) White Lightning
f) Supersub
g) Le petit général?
2: Who, and where, are:
a) Victoria Lucas
b) Robert Markham
c) Charles Norden
d) Joseph Kell?

Greyhound Bus

Who:
a) Got to within 24 hours of Tulsa?
b) Lost his heart in San Francisco?
c) Announced his impending arrival in California?
d) Walked to New Orleans?
e) First had Georgia on his mind?

In the Middle

1: Which pig:
a) Ruled all England with the Cat, the Rat and the Dog?
b) Sold the ring from his nose to assist a wedding?
c) Was entirely surrounded by water and became a little Anxious?
2: Who:
a) Stole a pig, ran away, was beaten, and went roaring down the street?
b) Spent his father's money, ran away, lived among pigs, and was welcomed home with open arms?
c) Distributed a beverage which turned all who drank it into pigs?
3: Who wrote:
a) *The Steam Pig*
b) *Pig - Sticking or Hog-Hunting*
c) *Truffle Hunt*
4: Who wrote:
a) The pig, if I am not mistaken,
Supplies us sausage, ham
and bacon.
Let others say his heart is big,
I call it stupid of the pig.
b) Pig sit still in the strainer!
Pig sit still in the strainer!
I want my pig tea.
c) There was a Pig that sat alone
Beside a ruined Pump:
By night and day he made
his moan –
It would have stirred a
heart of stone
To see him wring his
hoofs and groan
Because he could not jump.
5: Who said:
a) Rightly is they called pigs.
b) The gluttony of the Swine is put before us, as an example to the young. What is detestable in a pig, is more detestable in a boy.
c) Some men there are love not a gaping pig.
6: What are the pig-months?

Glad Rags

1: Who dressed in women's clothing while writing a book about Oxford?
2: Who dressed for balls in Munich 'as a Valkyrie in armour she made herself out of cardboard and silver paint'?
3: Who was tried in 61 BC for crashing the Bona Dea festival in women's clothes?
4: In which novel does 'a conventional Englishman dress in women's clothes to read Romantic poetry to himself?
5: Who dressed as a soldier and nursed her wounded lover back to life?
6: Who dressed as a washerwoman to make his escape from prison?
7: Who dressed as a boy to get into prison and free her husband?
8: Who dressed as women to escape from mobsters and joined a female band?
9: Who wrote:
Tu t'es promené à Leipzig
avec une
femme mince déguisée en
homme
Intelligence car voilà ce que
c'est qu'une femme
intelligente.

No Catches

Who was responsible for:
a) Purcell's Trumpet Voluntary
b) Haydn's Toy Symphony
c) Mozart's Adelaide Concerto
d) Trent's Last Case
e) Armstrong's Last Goodnight
f) Bruckner's Symphony No. '0'

Rising Fog

Whose last words were these:
a) (attrib) Bugger Bognor.
b) I am dying, as I have lived, beyond my means.
c) I must go in, the fog is rising.
d) Dieu me pardonnera; c'est son métier.
e) (trad) O my country! How I leave my country! (another version) I think I could eat one of Bellamy's pork pies.
f) I have lived as a philosopher; I die as a Christian.
g) Je vais quérir un grand peut-être.
h) (in delirium) This is not Beethoven lying here.
i) (about a proposed visit from Queen Victoria) Why should I see her? She will only want to give a message to Albert.
j) (to the doctor asking if his mind was at ease) No, it is not.

Woof Woof

1: Which enormous hound was killed by seven pistol shots on Dartmoor?
2: Which enormous hound was shot dead near Barnstaple after a fruitless search near Dunstable?
3: Who was pursued by a divine hound?
4: Of which large, weeping dog is it said, 'He's been like this ever since Munich'?
5: Who 'would rather see the portrait of a dog I know than all the allegorical paintings they can show me in the world'?
6: Who liked dogs better the more she saw of men?
7: Who imagined that 'the little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me'?
8: Whose beauty was 'like those Nicean barks of yore'?
9: Who said to whom: 'Pish for thee, Iceland dog! Thou prick-ear'd cur of Iceland'?

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Wine

Alan Watkins

On Dick and Drink

'We went into the dining room,' Richard Crossman recorded in his *Diaries*, 'and had claret and gulls' eggs and were gentlemen together.' He was here referring to a dinner with Roy Jenkins in the latter's club, Brooks's. In fact, there is a good deal of what P. G. Wodehouse called browsing and sluicing in the Crossman diaries. Indeed the references to drink, at any rate, seem to have aroused the indignation of Dame Rebecca West. In what was a mean-spirited and cavilling review masquerading as a *Spectator* Notebook, she refused to believe that Harold Wilson drank as much as Crossman claimed. But he did, you know, Dame Rebecca; he did.

Anyway, to return to Crossman's own drinking habits. He once said to me that you were either a gin man or a whisky man and that he was a gin man. He was never much of a one for port and brandy, regarding them as deleterious if not positively dangerous substances. Occasionally, however, he would go out of his way to place brandy before a favoured guest. One such was Lord Hartwell. At these times, Crossman would relate, Lady Hartwell (with whom he was always on amicable terms), would regard her husband with the eyes of a female eagle to see that he did not exceed the permitted dose.

About champagne Dick was distinctly mean. Or at least he was so on the one occasion when I had the opportunity of putting his generosity to the test. What happened was this: in early 1972 Crossman, still editor of the NEW STATESMAN, was recuperating at Cropredy from a major intestinal operation. The editorial staff of the NS decided to visit him en-bloc. At Paddington we gathered, and thence we went forth to Banbury like a rugger outing – or perhaps like an anti-rugger outing – bearing with us several bottles of Krug champagne (non-vintage but still distinctly expensive) which had been purchased with the workers' pennies. On our arrival at Cropredy, Dick accepted the proferred bottles with curt and perfunctory words of thanks and promptly removed them from the scene. We never saw them again.

In fact we did not see a drop of alcohol for the rest of the afternoon – though Anne Crossman provided us with a substantial and delicious tea. By five or thereabouts the old lags in the party (Anthony Howard, Tom Baistow and myself, to name but a few) were in need of fortification. This was because, to give only one reason, the afternoon had been trying. It was a Powellite occasion, by which I mean Anthony Powellite. Things came together, patterns were formed, several people's lives seemed to be in process of change; as, indeed, subsequently turned out to be the case. I hope to write about the whole episode at greater length at some future time.

Whether this was meanness properly so called on Dick's part I am, on second thoughts, not wholly sure. He once confessed to me how surprised he was by the drinking habits of the younger generation (I was then 39). What surprised him was not the quantity of alcohol consumed in toto – though this would certainly have been a valid point for him to make – but, rather, the way in which bottles of wine would be produced at dinner parties. 'When I was a young don,' he said, 'no one had wine in North Oxford, except on very special occasions. It was water, beer or cider. Wine was only for high table, and not always then.'

He certainly made up for this early temperance in later years, though I never saw him drunk. From time to time he made attempts, as his diary records, to give up gin: he would ask for dry vermouth instead. (A good generational or even class test, I have sometimes noticed, is whether one prefers gin-and-French or -Italian to gin-and-tonic. Ageing Conservative MPs whom I used to interview on *The Week in Westminster* programme would tend to ask for the vermouth in preference to the tonic. (Subsequently the BBC authorities, in an attempt to persuade the politicians of the Corporation's penury, cut off the supply of spirits and confined the interviewer and his subjects to beer and, if they were in luck, wine.)

But was Dick correct in saying that everyone was either a gin or a whisky man? This seems to me perilously like the either/or games people play, dividing women's faces, say, into buttons and horses, or prime ministers into bishops and bookmakers. Enoch Powell has even developed this form of diversion into a formula for ostensibly serious political argument, as in: 'Either Scotland is independent or it is not. You cannot have it both ways' (though, as Kenneth Tynan once pointed out, you can have it 37 different ways: but Tynan is presumably a person of greater resource than the rest of us in these matters). Still, I suppose there is something in the Crossman thesis, though I have known plenty of people (the late Anthony Crosland is an example) who drank gin in the middle of the day, whisky in the evening.

And the disjunctive approach, gin or whisky, seems to apply with even greater force to claret and burgundy. Crossman was undoubtedly a claret man. On one occasion at lunch at No 10 – I refuse to call it luncheon, as some people who would not dream of saying the word insist on writing it, just to show they are OK – at lunch, I repeat, Crossman declined the lager offered by Harold Wilson and insisted on a glass of claret instead; it does not seem he got more than one. Evelyn Waugh, on the other hand, was a burgundy man, or became such in his later years. Lady (Frances) Donaldson records in her memoir of him that he suddenly became fed up with claret, sold off his remaining stocks and bought burgundy instead. His son Auberon retains the preference and likes to drink burgundy (red burgundy, I mean) even with fish.

Roy Jenkins also has been known to drink burgundy with fish. This may strike you as surprising not only because it is popularly assumed to be not quite acceptable to drink red wine with fish but also because Jenkins was, as he still is, written of as the very model of a claret man. In virtually every article that appeared about him there occurred, after the standard remarks on his exalted social tastes, an equally ritualistic reference to his liking for fine claret. (The wine hacks are always going on about 'claret lovers', as if wine were like men and women, which it is not.) Actually Jenkins likes burgundy, too. He once sapiently remarked to me that '1969 was a very good year for burgundy but less good for claret'.

The reason for this false ascription of tastes to Jenkins lies, I suspect, in the emotive overtones or incandescent glow to the word 'claret'. It is regarded, in the popular prints at any rate, as the natural and proper drink of gentlemen and the discriminating and those who aspire to either or both of these conditions. This claret 'image' is really rather odd when you come to think about it. It is, of course, a drier drink than burgundy; and a liking for dry drinks is assumed to be a mark of what has come to be called sophistication.

This modern fad, by the way, has led to a neglect of the sweet white wines of Bordeaux, which are a bargain and can be drunk not only with puddings but also as a substitute for port. And, as we are temporarily on the subject of white Bordeaux, we should remember that Graves produces some nice dry white wines. At £1.40 or so a bottle it provides better value, I think, than white burgundy. (A good example is Kressmann Graves (NV), imported by Percy Fox, who sounds like a character out of Beatrix Potter but is really an exceptionally reliable firm.)

However, to return to the claret/burgundy business. Dryness notwithstanding (and some clarets from St Emilion and such lesser-known regions as Fronsac are not dry at all), it is a bit difficult to see why claret should be regarded as the, in the social sense, superior drink. For one thing, it is cheaper than burgundy: more of it is made. In so far as the comparison can be drawn, you will pay £3 for a burgundy and £2 for a claret of equivalent quality. And, for another thing, it is much easier than burgundy to understand. On the face of it this may seem odd. All those chateaux, all those vintages!

Provided you have a goodish memory, though, the very multiplicity of chateaux makes buying easier. Thus a Ch. Cissac 1973, say, is likely to taste much the same irrespective of the identity of the wine merchant or the importer, provided always you are not dealing with rogues. (There are, of course, differences among chateau, French and London bottlings. But partly owing to Common Market regulations, Lon-

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don bottling is on the way out generally.)

Yet a burgundy of equivalent price, a straight Pommard 1973 for example – we are now in the just-over-£3 range – is a much more speculative commodity. What you get for your money depends, more than it does with claret, on the wine merchant and the importer. There are several solutions. You can go up market and pay more, much more, for a single domaine, domaine bottled burgundy. More sensibly, you can buy modest wines from a good burgundy firm such as Berry Bros and Rudd of St James's Street.

Or, if you are buying at supermarkets and off-licenses, you can restrict yourself to reliable importers such as Geisweiler or Bouchard. Again, you can move into the southern burgundy area, the beaujolais country, though some pundits say that neither the wine nor the place ought properly to be called burgundy at all: certainly the wine is made out of different grapes. Moulin-à-Vent is probably nearest to a 'true' burgundy: at any rate it matures for five years or so in bottle. As for the 'beaujolais nouveau' kink, I should prefer to drink a fruity Hungarian or Yugoslav red or, failing that, grape juice from the grocer's, which has the advantage of being cheaper and the disadvantage of not making you drunk. J. Mommesin is a reliable importer of southern burgundy or Macon wines.

For myself, I do not take sides in the burgundy/claret dispute. I like them both, but they are too expensive for routine drinking. I go for Rioja Alavesa (Spain) or Touraine Gamay (France: Gamay is the name of the grape). Dick Crossman would have approved. Though he claimed to be a claret man, he never made much fuss about what he was drinking, provided it was tolerable. In fact he seemed to gulp the stuff down. I lack Dick's capacity but approve the general approach.

Food

Hilary Spurling

A Water for Melancholie

In the days when greasy Joan did keel the pot, strong drink had by no means reached the pleasant state in which we know it now. Lady Fettiplace, whose hand-written cookbook (dated 1604) I have been using for the past two years, made metheglin from honey fermented in water with spices and strawberry leaves, parsley, wild thyme and eglantine. She produced her own apricock, elderberry and gooseberry wine, and she recommended claret for babies ('Give a newborne Child on spoonefull of Clarret wine the first thinge yt taketh, & yt shall never bee troubled with the fallinge Sicknesse'). She distilled an all-purpose remedy, aqua mirabilis, from brandy wine and sack, and she cured toothache with aquavitae mixed with treacle or honey, pepper and pellitory root.

But a great deal of her time was spent on experiments designed to make aquavitae, or neat spirit, palatable for other than medicinal purposes. It was round about the 1630s that French farmers first began producing saleable quantities of cognac. Lady Fettiplace was working meanwhile on various primitive, potent and somewhat over-flavoured versions of uskebaugh (Gaelic for water of life, Englished as whiskybae, and later shortened to whisky). Most of them involved steeping the liquor with sliced liquorice and aniseed, dried fruits, spices, ambergris and musk; others included sugar or saffron, red rose leaves and Indian spikenard; none of them seems to be in quite the same class as cointreau, also being evolved round about this time across the Channel.

For feasts and festivals the chief attraction was not so much the drink, which ran to quantity rather than quality, as the sometimes staggering table-decorations. Medieval cooks had dressed their boards with monsters like the cockatrice (a chicken's forequarters sewn to a pig's hindparts) or gigantic and generally inedible subtleties in the shape of ships, swans, stags, garrisoned and battlemented pastry castles. Sweetmeats and only slightly less spectacular centre-pieces (pies with people in them – children or court dwarves – being replaced by lesser fry like live frogs and blackbirds) remained a speciality in the great Jacobean and Stuart kitchens. Lady Fettiplace gives directions for every kind of delicacy from striped and twisted sticks of sugar plate to candied flowers and fruit, elaborate 'printed iellies', spiced saffron buns, little cakes flavoured with rose petals, violets, oranges or almonds.

She is particularly strong on sticky fruit sweetmeats like quince paste, made from the pulp of quinces boiled with an equal quantity of sugar till the mixture candies, then set to dry before the fire in fancy moulds, or boxes. I use one of those fish-shaped metal moulds sold for mousse, which turns out a gleaming sculpted fish, amber or deep-plum coloured, its scales elegantly speckled with flecks of darker red; but you can use any frilled or fluted tin or china mould, and apples instead of quinces as in the following recipe:

To make tart stuf of pippins green

When you have scaled your pippins . . . rub the greenest of them throwe a hyre sive, then way to every pound thereof a pound of sugar, & a little rosewater, so boile it alltogether, still stirring it till it bee as thick as you will have it.

Make a syrup from the sugar and rosewater (about a quarter pint of triple-strength rosewater to each pound of sugar), put in the peeled and coarsely grated apples and simmer for two to two-and-a-half hours, stirring carefully towards the end, until the tart stuff thickens and turns deep red. This makes a rich and faintly oriental filling for puff pastry cases, or a handsome pudding on its own (in which case pour the apples into an oiled mould, leave overnight to set and serve well chilled). Alternatively, for a glistening pale golden tart filling made of strips of apple set in a thick syrup, boil your stuff briskly for ten to twenty minutes till it sets like jam: only for this you must use a firm-textured green apple like Golden Delicious, which will keep its shape, not the fluffy Bramley which tastes nicer but boils to a brown mush. Either version of this tart stuff keeps well, if put up like jam in sealed jars.

Mincemeat for Christmas pies is one of the few modern survivals from the medieval kitchen in which all dishes, sweet or savoury, were so highly spiced and often so garishly coloured that it became practically impossible to distinguish the original ingredients. Lady Fettiplace's recipe is made with meat, as Mrs Beeton's still was two-and-a-half centuries later, which gives it rather more body than most versions we are used to. It is also subtly flavoured and not too sweet:

Parboile your mutton, then take as much beef suet as meat, & mince it both small. then put mace & nutmegs & cinamon, & sugar & oringes peels, & currance, & great reasins, & a little rosewater, put all these to the meat, beat your spice & oringe peels very small, & mingle your fruit & spice & all togither, with the meat, & so bake it. put as much currance as meat, & twice so much sugar as salt, put some ginger into it.

To half a pound of minced cooked lamb take half a pound each of suet, currants and raisins. Season with one rounded teaspoonful of salt, two of brown sugar, the grated rind of an orange, half a level teaspoonful each of powdered ginger, mace, nutmeg and cinnamon; and moisten with rosewater. This is best made at least a month before Christmas (in Lady Fettiplace's day presumably it would have had to be made round about Martinmas, 1 November, when all the animals not needed for breeding were slaughtered and salted for the winter); but, failing that, leave it overnight if you can for the flavours to develop before filling your pastry cases, crimping and glazing the lids, and baking for approximately ten minutes in a hot oven.

Lastly, here are a couple of remedies almost certain to come in handy at some point during the festivities. The first, which anyone planning a family reunion might be wise to make up in advance, is *For the fret in a child*: 'Take sallet oyle, and greene lavender, and Cummin seed, & boyle it together, & lay it to the navell of the child, upon black wool, & it will help.'

The second is a cure for a disease of the period which is still peculiarly apt to afflict intellectuals at Christmas:

A water for Melancholie

Take claret wine one pottle, & an handfull of borrage flowers, and as many buglos, and three ounces of cynamon, & still [distill] it all together in a still, & then drink it with your wyne at your meate.

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Northrop Frye

The Utopian State of Mind

The first half of the 20th century saw two world wars, each of which was started by a reactionary military autocracy operating mainly in Germany and ended in a major communist revolution, first in Russia, then in China. The second half of the century saw the beginning of a new revolutionary development that seems to have more in common with anarchism than with communism. The anarchist nature of the 'New Left' is often recognised, but usually without much sense of the traditions or context of anarchism.

In my own student days, during the Depression of the Thirties, anarchism was a negligible force, at least on North American campuses, and the most influential radical movements were close to marxism as interpreted by Stalin. The pro-Stalinist radical thought of himself as a 'worker' – that is, he had no quarrel with the work ethic of capitalism as an ethic, only with its economic setting. The metaphors of 'left wing' and 'right wing' were essential to him, because he thought in terms of an eventual separation and struggle for power between proletarian and bourgeois camps. His outlook was intensely international, and his tactics conformed to an internationally directed and organised strategy. His attitude to social issues was rational, every injustice and cruelty under capitalism being only what one would expect of that system. His attitude to the arts was deeply conservative, based mainly on the content of what was said or painted, or, at most, on allegorical reference. I remember a Canadian communist magazine that condemned practically all 20th-century Canadian painting as bourgeois formalism, and reproduced Victorian anecdotal pictures, depicting foreclosures of mortgages and the like, as examples of the genuine cultural tradition. The Stalinist's personal ethics, when consistent with his political outlook, tended to be rigorous: self-indulgence or muddling one's mind with liquor and drugs was for him only the kind of thing that capitalism encouraged.

Hardly any of these characteristics are true of the present New Left. Like the 19th-century anarchists, contemporary radicals favour direct action or 'confrontation', and favour also the kind of spontaneous uprising with no context in past or future, which is without precedence and without direction. The word 'existential' is often used approvingly to describe a political action which has no particular point. Unlike the Stalinist with his sacred texts of Marx and Lenin and his libraries of commentary on them, many who call themselves anarchists today have never heard of Kropotkin or Bakunin, or would take the slightest interest in them if they had. The 19th-century anarchists lost out to the more disciplined communists in the struggle for control of the working class, partly because they tended to the extremes of either passivity or violence. There was the Arcadian anarchism of Morris's *News from Nowhere* and the terroristic anarchism of Conrad's *Secret Agent*. Similarly, radicals of today range from flower children to assassins, though their main centre of gravity is of course in an intermediate activism. Their most effective revolutionary tactics are closer to Gandhi than to Lenin, and their great heroes are romantics like Che Guevara, who commands much the same kind of appeal, and for many of the same reasons, that Garibaldi commanded among British liberals a century ago.

The contemporary anarchist, like his 19th-century forebears, tends to localise his protest: he is well aware of the global context of contemporary unrest, but his own movement is likely to be confined to an immediate area of interest. Hence small separatist movements, like those in Quebec or Belgium, are also a part of contemporary radicalism. The conception of 'participatory democracy', which demands a thorough-going decentralisation, is also anarchist in context. In some respects this fact presents a political picture almost the reverse of that of the previous generation. For today's radical the chief objects of loyalty during the Thirties, trade unions and the revolutionary directives of Moscow, have become reactionary social forces, whereas some radical movements like the Black Panthers, which appear to have committed themselves both to violence and to racism, seem to descend from fascism, which also had anarchist affinities. Similarly, anarchism does not seek to create a 'working class': much of its dynamic comes from a bourgeois disillusionment with an over-productive society and the work ethic itself.

Both political movements show many analogies to the religious movements which preceded them. The attitude of the old-line Stalinist to the Soviet Union was very like that of a Roman Catholic to his Church, at least before the Second Vatican Council. There was a tremendous international institution which was the definitive interpreter of the marxist revelation, and one could work effectively for the world-wide triumph of that revelation only from within the institution. Contemporary anarchists, at least those who can read, are more like the Puritans in the way that they seek a primitive gospel in the early work of Marx, before social and institutional marxism began to corrupt it. Perhaps the similarity, however, is less with Puritanism than with the Anabaptists (who in the 16th century were also anarchists tending to the same polarity of pacifism and terrorism) and the more fervid evangelicals. Among religious bodies, those who are most dramatically increasing their membership today are the most uncritical and fundamentalist sects, and I doubt whether this is simply coincidence. There are some curious parallels between the present and the 19th-century American scene, between contemporary turn-on sessions and 19th-century ecstatic revivalism, between beatnik and hippy communes and some of the 19th-century Utopian projects. Stalinist marxism had practically nothing in the American tradition to attach itself to, but anarchism is one of the central elements in American culture. Jefferson's states-rights and local autonomy thinking, Thoreau's civil disobedience, Lincoln's view of the Civil War as a revolution against the inner spirit of slavery, many cultural phenomena as diverse as *Huckleberry Finn*, the Chaplin films, and the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound, all show a radical dynamic that has affinities with anarchism. So did the populist movements at the turn of the century, which showed the same revolutionary ambivalence, tending equally to the Left or to the Right, that I have just noted in the contemporary scene. As for terroristic anarchism, one hardly needs to document that in so violent a country as America. The spirit of the late Joseph McCarthy is still around, but it is much more difficult for it to regard the recent type of radical protest as un-American.

Anarchism has another advantage over communism in its relation to the creative arts. The primary revolutionary categories of today tend to be psychological rather than economic, closer in many respects to Freud than to Marx, as we see in many of the writers who have tried to articulate the present radical mood, such as Herbert Marcuse. A ferment in the arts, including a revival of oral poetry, is an integral part of today's radicalism, as, despite a great many spasmodic efforts, it never became in the radicalism of 40 years ago. The drug cults are another aspect of the same psychologically based activity. They are not intended merely to take one's mind off one's troubles: they are part of an attempt to recharge the batteries of the mind after they have been drained by disillusionment: that is, by the withdrawal of libido from consumer goods, or what advertising is still presenting as the good things of life.

The metaphors of left and right wing are still employed, but they have much less relevance to anarchism than to communism. The marxist saw a steadily widening split between two parts of society, an eventual struggle for power, and the final victory of the working class. The contemporary radical seems to think rather in terms of a single society, with localised cells and nuclei of radicalism agitating and transforming it from within. Communism was intensely teleological in spirit: every communist-directed strike or demonstration was one step in the great campaign of class

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struggle and revolutionary triumph. The anarchism of today seems almost as indifferent to the future as to the past: one protest will be followed by another, because even if one issue is resolved society will still be sick.

If I am right, then anarchism is committed by the logic of its position to becoming increasingly non-violent. Violence appears to be an inescapable stage in sobering up an unwilling conservatism and in impressing it with the sense that it is not dealing with children. An ascendant class tends to make an indulgent comic strip out of any group from which unrest seems likely: thus we had the Paddy-and-his-pig Irishman in 19th-century England, the Rastus-and-Jemima comic or lovable negro in white America, and so on. But once the pattern of opposition is established, the effectiveness of violence diminishes. Naturally this does not happen easily, violence being the opiate of the revolutionary: even university students are strongly affected by the 'let's do something and not just talk about it' syndrome. But where there is no really serious conception of a climactic struggle for power in which the victor achieves permanent authority, 'talk' is the final mode of radical action, and the form that its ultimate confrontation has to take. I spoke of the affinity between some contemporary anarchism and fascism, with its belief in violence as being in a sense its own end. In Nazi Germany this took the form of a melancholy *Götterdämmerung* nihilism, whose goal appeared to be not so much its professed one of world-rule as annihilation in some heroic last stand, a second Roncesvalles or Thermopylae. This mood is, I think, intelligible to today's anarchist, who has inherited all the heroic gloom of existentialism, as it was utterly unintelligible to the Stalinist radical. I remember when Yeats's *Last Poems* appeared in 1939, and how brusquely their sardonic bleakness was dismissed as 'morbid' by the radicals of that day. But they speak with a peculiar and haunting eloquence now, even to the most self-righteous of student radicals.

I referred a moment ago to the anarchist strain in American culture: another example of it is the work of Edgar Allan Poe, whose significance as a portent of many aspects of contemporary literature it is hard to do full justice to. Poe wrote an essay called 'The Poetic Principle' in which he asserted that a long poem was a contradiction in terms, that all existing long poems of genuine quality consisted of moments of intense poetic experience stuck together with connective tissues of narrative or argument which were really versified prose. The fact that this doctrine was preposterous so far as it was applied to Homer or Milton did not prevent it from having a tremendous influence on future poetry, including the French *symbolistes* and Pound and Eliot in England. What happens in literature is very likely to happen in life as a whole a century or so later. In Poe's day, and in fact up to about 1945, one of the most solidly rooted assumptions in middle-class Western culture was the sense of continuity in time. That is, life was thought of teleologically, as something that contained a developing purpose and direction. Some gave this feeling a religious reference: for many Christians the essence of Christianity was in the renewed meaning which the Incarnation had given to human history. In marxist thought the 'historical process', which is an irresistible force on the side of those who accept it, played a similar role. The artist, if faced with hostility or misunderstanding, assumed, with Max Beerbohm's Enoch Soames, that he would be vindicated by posterity, for whom he was really writing. Others, like Spengler in *The Decline of the West*, saw the teleology in history from the opposite point of view, as an organic process that first matured and then declined. For a great number of bourgeois intellectuals, the doctrine of evolution afforded a scientific proof of teleology in human life, and the doctrine of progress in history, though of course much older than Darwin, became increasingly a mythical analogy of evolution. H. G. Wells in his *Outline of History* (1920) concludes a chapter on 'Early Thought' with a picture of human sacrifice at Stonehenge and an appended comment:

> And amidst the throng march the appointed human victims, submissive, helpless, staring towards the distant smoking altar at which they are to die – that the harvests may be good and the tribe increase . . . To that had life progressed 3,000 or 4,000 years ago from its starting-place in the slime of the tidal beaches.

The death-wish in human life, so dramatically emergent in the first world war, could hardly be ignored by anyone writing in 1920: but although the final remark is intended ironically, it echoes with the complacency of the 'long view'.

One of the most striking cultural facts of our time is the disappearance of this teleological sense. We tend now to think of our lives as being, like the long poem as described by Poe, a discontinuous sequence of immediate experiences. What holds them together, besides mere survival, can only be some kind of voluntary and enforced ideology. Thus the artist may keep his life continuous by a belief in creativity, the businessman by a belief in productivity, the religious man by a belief in God, the politician by a belief in policy. But the more intense the immediate experience, the more obviously its context in past and future time drops away from it. The word 'absurd' refers primarily to the disappearance of the sense of continuity in our day. It is not so much that the world around us no longer suggests any meaning or purpose concealed in its design: that in itself, as Robbe-Grillet says, means not that the world is absurd, but merely that it is there. The sense of absurdity comes from time, not space; from the feeling that life is not a continuous absorption of experiences into a steadily growing individuality, but a discontinuous series of encounters between moods and situations which keep bringing us back to the same point.

In this situation there is one positive feature of great importance: the sharpening of moral sensitivity. I spoke of the complacency inherent in the progressive 'long view', and belief in progress can easily become the most morally callous of all beliefs. The thing about Russian marxism that most sickened its bourgeois supporters was the readiness with which it could (and still can, evidently) embark on a massacre, an invasion of a small independent country, or a deliberately induced famine, for the sake of the greater good that such procedures would bring, from its own point of view, to posterity. In a now neglected book, *Ends and Means*, Aldous Huxley pointed out how means can never lead to ends, because they condition and eventually replace those ends. George Orwell's *1984*, one of the most important books recording the transition in mood from the last to the present generation, shows more vividly how the donkey's carrot of progress can become an indefinite prolonging of misery. It seems to me admirable that contemporary radicals should be concerned with the rights of those who are alive now, and should be protesting against war because it is killing innocent people at this moment, refusing to listen to any long-term rationalisations about the crusade against communism or the white man's burden.

A less attractive side of the same situation is the general panic, even hysteria, that the loss of reference to temporal context has left us with. The most obvious form of this panic is the flight from the past: the anxiety to be up-to-date, to be rid of unfashionable ideas and techniques, to condemn everything unsatisfactory with the same formula, that it is too cumbersome and obsolete for the unimpeded movement assumed to be necessary today. A society with a revolutionary basis, like American society, is often inclined to be impatient of history and tradition. 'History is bunk,' said Henry Ford, at one end of the social scale: 'I don't take no stock in dead people,' said Huckleberry Finn, at the other. The future, in such a view, cannot be the outcome of the past: it is a brand new future, which may be implicit in the present but is to be built out of the materials of the present by an act of will, which cannot operate until it has been released from the past. The strongly negative mood in today's radicalism, the tendency to be against rather than for, is consistent with this: whatever is defined is hampering, and only the undefined is free.

The resulting crisis of spirit is a far-reaching one. That it has caused a political crisis goes without saying. But there is also a crisis in the arts and in the intellect. The creative artist cannot appeal to posterity, as he no longer assumes that the future will be continuous with the present, and, more important, the impetus to produce the 'great' work of art has itself been considerably weakened. For, traditionally, the great work of art became a classic, that is, a work connecting the present with the past. One sometimes wonders if the age of *great* writers or painters or composers is over, and if what is in front of us

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culturally is not rather a diffused creative energy, much or most of it taking fairly ephemeral forms, a general rather than a specialised social product. Again, there is a crisis in the intellect, for the assumption that science and scholarship are progressively developing, in a semi-autonomous way, is in many quarters questioned or denied. But above all, the crisis is a religious one. The problems connected with the discontinuous and the absurd are problems affecting the way man lives his life, affecting his conceptions of his nature and destiny, affecting his sense of identity. They are, in short, existential problems, and existentialism has been formulated mainly either in the explicitly religious context of Kierkegaard and Unamuno, or in the context of Heidegger and Sartre, which is no less religious for being atheistic. I feel that contemporary radicalism is deeply, even desperately, religious both in its anxieties and in its assertions: that it cannot, for the most part, accept the answers given its questions by the existing religious bodies, and that a great deal of student unrest is based on a feeling that the university ought to be trying to answer such questions, but cannot do so until it has been shaken loose from the 'Establishment'. That this is a misunderstanding of what the university is and can do is undoubtedly true. But the questions remain, as urgent as ever, and some people in the universities ought to try to deal with them sympathetically, as questions, before they freeze into dogmas.

There are two special conceptions so deeply rooted in our experience that they can be presented only as myths. One is the social contract, the original social contract, the myth which attempts to explain the nature of the conditioning we accept by getting born. The other is the Utopia, the myth of an ideal social contract. Both these myths have religious affiliations: the contract is connected with the alienation myth of the Fall of Man, and the Utopia with the transcendence myth of the City of God. The overtones of the social contract myth are ironic, sometimes tragic. Before we were born, we were predestined to join a social continuum at a certain historical point: we belonged to the 20th century and to a social class even as embryos in the womb. We belong to something before we are anything, and the first datum of our lives is the set of social conditions and assumptions that we are already committed to. The conservative temperament is strongly attracted by the positive aspects of this contract. He feels that his own development is a matter of growing organically out of the roots of his social context. What is presented to him at birth, he feels, is a set of loyalties given to him before he is capable of choosing them. To try to reject what one is already committed to can only lead to confusion and chaos, both in one's own life and in society. Further, we discover in the permanence and continuity of social institutions, such as Church and State, something that not only civilises man, but adds a dimension of significance to his otherwise brief and insignificant life.

Such, it seems to me, is the conservative view of the social contract, expounded so lucidly by Burke and recapitulated over a century later, by T. S. Eliot. The radical view of it focuses on the uncritical element in our inherited loyalties, as expressed in such maxims as 'my country right or wrong'. Maturity and development, the radical feels, are a matter of becoming aware of our conditioning and, in so becoming aware, of making a choice between presented and discovered loyalties. This attitude, developing through Rousseau and Marx, reached a further stage with the existentialism that followed the second world war. Traditionally, the difference between sanity and hysteria, between reality and hallucination, had always been that sanity and reality lasted longer, and were continuous in a way that their opposites could not be. The rise of Nazi Germany suggested the possibility of a social hysteria indefinitely prolonged by the control of communications. But perhaps what we have been calling sanity and reality is an unconsciously induced hysteria, and the way to deliverance is through and beyond the loyalty of uncritical acceptance. The only real loyalty, then, is the voluntary or self-chosen loyalty.

This is the state of mind which dominates the radical of today: an intensely Utopian state of mind which feels that it owes loyalty only to a social ideal not yet in existence. The Vietnam issue, particularly, raised the question of what was called,

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in the title of an indifferent book of 25 years ago, the meaning of treason. In Dante's *Inferno*, in Shakespeare's tragedies, the traitor, the man who breaks the social contract assigned him at birth, is the lowest of criminals. In our day the word 'treason', almost without our realising it, has joined the word 'heresy' as a word that could once intimidate, but is now only a Hallowe'en mask.

We notice that the prose romances called Utopias, from Campanella to Edward Bellamy, have been rather compulsive and anxiety-ridden stories. In literature, at any rate, they have made far less imaginative impact than the Utopian satires, such as *Gulliver's Travels*, which ought perhaps to be thought of rather as satires on the social contract. Some of the 19th-century Utopias, like Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, might have looked attractive at the time in contrast to the misery and anarchy of unrestricted *laissez-faire*. But reading them now, we simply cannot believe the author's assertions that the citizens of their ideal states are perfectly happy: if they are, we can only feel, as we feel with all victims of brainwashing, that there is something subhuman about them. The reason for this feeling is not hard to see. The conservative who accepts the loyalties presented to him by his society is, to use two stock words of our time, committed and engaged. Commitment and engagement, in themselves, as just said, contain an uncritical element, and tend also to be somewhat humourless, because, confronted with a genuine absurdity in society, their instinct is to rationalise the absurdity instead of recognising it. The Utopian attitude begins in detachment, but at that point conceives of an alternative institution and transfers its loyalties to that. This alternative institution will, of course, also demand commitment, and of a more intense kind: it will tolerate much less dissent and criticism, much less sense of the absurd or ironic, than the conservative outlook normally permits.

It seems to me that the marxist revolutionary movement is the definitive form of what I have called the Utopian attitude of mind, the transfer of loyalty from one's native society to another society still to be constructed. When Engels contrasted Utopian with 'scientific' socialism he was really completing the Utopian argument. In a world like ours a limited Utopia, confined to one definite place, is an empty fantasy: it must be a world-wide transformation of the whole social order or it is nothing. But for it to be this it must be conceived, not as an *a priori* rational construct, but as the *telos* of history, the end to which history points. The 'scientific' element in marxist socialism, then, is a religious belief in the teleology of history.

Marxism envisages a social cleavage in which the possibility of argument, discussion, or what is now called 'dialogue' disappears. One does not need to answer an argument: one needs only to identify it as coming from our side or theirs. It is not talk but a planned sequence of actions leading to an ultimate confrontation or showdown that is important. I suggested earlier that the contemporary anarchist radical, though he adopts much of this attitude, is really a post-marxist revolutionary, forced by the logic of his situation from action into 'dialogue'. He has no real sense of a proletarian society, and his protest is, primarily and essentially, protest, not a mere prelude to taking power himself. Does this mean, then, that the end of contemporary anarchism is compromise with conservatism? To some extent this may be true. I think democracy is in the initial stages of working out a two-party opposition far less cumbersome and hypocritical, and representing a more genuine division of attitudes, than the one now represented in our parliaments and congresses. But it seems to me that the real end at which anarchism is aiming is very different.

The conservative preference is for commitment and engagement: the Utopian, marxist, or existential radical begins in detachment, but annuls this detachment in favour of a new commitment. The end of commitment and engagement is the community: the end of detachment, then, is clearly the individual. This is not, however, an antithesis; nobody ought to be a mere creature of a community, like an insect; nobody can be a pure individual detached from his society. I mentioned earlier the vogue for certain words which seem for a time to have a magical significance. Twenty years ago one such word was 'maturity', now out of fashion for obvious reasons. It does seem to me to have some meaning, if not a magical one. The child, and the adolescent in a different way, oscillates be-

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tween loyalty to the community of his contemporaries and moods of rebelliousness and introversion. As one matures, one's social mask becomes more difficult to remove, and one becomes resigned to a continuous social role. But that very process of adjusting to society is what makes the genuine individual possible. The barriers designed to protect the individual from encroachment from without have to dissolve before he can realise that he is not a real individual until his energy flows freely into his social relations. What is true of personal life is true of society. Primitive societies are rigidly ritualised ones; only the mature society permits the genuine individual to emerge. By doing so it does not fall apart: it merely transfers more of its order from external compulsion to internal discipline, from reflex response to the habit of learning. The artist, too, often begins as a member of a school, issuing manifestos and the like, but tends to draw away from such affiliations as he finds his own style. Yet his growing individuality is also a measure of his social acceptance.

If we take a second look at our greatest Utopians, Plato and More, we notice that Socrates in the *Republic* is not concerned about setting up his ideal state anywhere; what he is concerned about is the analogy between his ideal state and the structure of the wise man's mind, with its reason, will and desire corresponding to the philosopher-king, soldiers and artisans of the political myth. The ideal state exists, so far as we know, only in such minds, which will obey its laws whatever society they are actually living in. Similarly, More calls his ideal state Utopia, meaning nowhere. Hythloday (the 'babbler'), who has been to Nowhere, has returned a revolutionary communist, convinced that nothing can be done with Europe until it has been destroyed and a replica of the Utopia set up in its place. But More himself, to whom the story is being told, suggests using the knowledge of Utopia rather as a means of bringing about an improvement in European society from within. Plato and More realise that while the wise man's mind is rigidly disciplined, and while the mature state is ordered, we cannot take the analogy between the disciplined mind and the disciplined state too literally. For Plato certainly, and for More probably, the wise man's mind is a ruthless dictatorship of reason over appetite, achieved by control of the will. When we translate this into its social equivalents of a philosopher-king ruling workers by storm troopers (not 'guardians', as in Jowett, but 'guards'), we get the most frightful tyranny. Yet the real Utopia is an individual goal, of which the disciplined society is an allegory. The reason for the allegory is that the Utopian ideal points beyond the individual to a condition in which, as in Kant's kingdom of ends, society and individual are no longer in conflict: they have become different aspects of the same human body.

Not only does contemporary radicalism include separatist movements, but it is itself intensely separatist in feeling, and hence the question of where one stops separating becomes central. One feels that the more extreme radicals of our time are simply individualists. The more strident the anarchist slogan, the more clearly the individualistic basis of its attitude appears, and the more obviously the Utopian attitude is a projection of it. In the Utopianism of Plato and More the traditional authoritarian structure of society was treated as an allegory of the dictatorship of reason in the wise man's mind. We do not now think of the wise man's mind as a dictatorship of reason: in fact we do not think of the wise man's mind at all. We think rather, in Freudian terms, of a mind in which a principle of normality and balance is fighting for its life against a thundering herd of chaotic impulses, which cannot be simply suppressed but must be frequently indulged and humoured, always allowed to have their say, however silly or infantile it may be. In short, we think of the mind as a participating democracy: necessary to live with, yet cumbersome, exasperating, and not an ideal but a process. In such an analogy there is no place for the inner-directed person who resists society until death, like Socrates, or More himself: society is divided and the 'individual', despite the etymology of the word, self-divided.

In this process the refusal of all loyalty and authority, the attempt of the individual to assert himself against his whole social context, is one such infantile impulse, to be listened to and ignored. The mature individual, who has come to some working arrangement with his society, is looking rather for a loyalty which is coherent and objective enough to create a community, but commands an authority that fulfils and does not diminish the individual. Such a conception of authority is the kind of authority that education embodies: the authority of logic and reason, of demonstrable and repeatable experiment, of established fact, of compelling imagination. Formerly, the sources of loyalty and authority were the social institutions which formed the civilised context of individual life, but these institutions have really been projected from the total body of reason and imagination represented by the arts and sciences. In our age the mortality of social institutions is what impresses us, and when they can no longer command genuine loyalty or authority, we can only return to their source. Further, when we take a third look at the greatest writers on the social contract and the Utopia – Plato, More, Locke, Rousseau – we begin to suspect that they are not really writing about contracts or Utopias at all, but the theory of education. Perhaps the social contract and the ideal state are also projections, into the past and the future respectively, of a source of social authority that sits in the middle of our society, and which I shall call the educational contract.

'We do not now think of the wise man's mind as a dictatorship of reason: in fact we do not think of the wise man's mind at all. We think rather, in Freudian terms, of a mind in which a principle of normality and balance is fighting for its life against a thundering herd of chaotic impulses . . . which must be frequently indulged and humoured . . .'

By the educational contract I mean the process by which the arts and sciences, and their methods of logic, experiment, amassing of evidence, and imaginative presentation, actually operate as a source of authority in society. The authority of the social contract is a *de facto* authority: it exists and it may be rationalised, but it lacks a genuinely ideal dimension, and thereby keeps social ideals in an empty world of wish or hope. Conservatives cluster around *de facto* authority and radicals around ideals, but as long as they are kept apart, the revolutionary argument, that the Utopian spirit can only gather force on its side and destroy the existing contract, seems unanswerable. The educational contract makes it possible for both sides to submit their social attitudes to a tribunal that not only respects but includes them both. What is needed is a free authority, something coherent enough to create a community, but not an authority in the sense of applying external compulsion.

This conception of an educational contract was the main contribution made by the great development of educational theory in 19th-century England. It is the area of free thought and discussion which is at the centre of John Stuart Mill's view of liberty, and which is thought of as a kind of intellectual counterpart of Parliament. It differs from Parliament, for Mill, in that the liberals can never have a majority, which is why democracy has to function as an illogical but deeply humane combination of majority rule and minority right. In Matthew Arnold the educational contract is called culture, and Arnold is explicit about its being the source of genuine authority in society and at the same time operating in a Utopian direction, breaking down the barriers of class conflict and heading in the direction of a classless society. Newman's distinction between useful and liberal knowledge is parallel, when we realise that it is a distinction between two aspects of education, not two kinds of education. All forms of education are at once useful and liberal: they help us to locate ourselves in existing society and they help to develop us as individuals, detached but not withdrawn from that society. Of course Mill's areas of discussion, Arnold's culture and Newman's liberal knowledge are conceptions far wider than the university, but the university is obviously their engine-room, and their power can last only so long as the university keeps operating. The university is the source of free authority in society, not as an institution, but as the place where the appeal to reason, experiment, evidence, and imagination is continuously going on.

It is on this basis, perhaps, that we can deal with the demand of student activists for relevance in relation to personal as distinct from social life. Using Newman's distinction, there are two aspects to this demand: a utilitarian aspect and a liberal one. The utilitarian one is for subjects of education to conform to what the student thinks to be his present relation to society, so that, for instance, 20th-century literature would be more relevant than medieval literature. This is, of course, an immature demand, and should be met with massive and uncompromising resistance. In literature, every major writer may be studied in his relation to his own time, or in his relation to the communicative power that makes him relevant to us. To concentrate solely on the latter distorts him by translating him en-

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tirely into our own modes of thought. When we study him in relation to his own time we are led into a different kind of culture, with unfamiliar assumptions, beliefs and values. But contact with these is what expands our own view of human possibilities, and it is what is irrelevant, in the narrow sense, about what we study that is the liberalising element in it.

The other conception of relevance needs to be more seriously considered. It rests, in the first place, on a division between two types of academic discipline, often identified with the humanities and the sciences, though not quite co-terminous with them. The word 'scientific' implies among other things a desire to escape from controversy, to rest one's case on evidence, logical and mathematical demonstration or open experiment, which are, as far as possible, beyond the reach of the kind of argument that attacks the validity of its postulates. The assumption is that while what is true today may be insufficiently true tomorrow, still anything that has ever been true – really true, not just believed – will always be continuous with whatever is going to be true. But there are other subjects which deal, not with the world around man (the sciences), but with the world that man is trying to create. These subjects can never escape from controversy or radical questioning, because existential values are built into them. I should call them the mythological subjects: they include large areas of history, political theory, religion, philosophy, psychology, anthropology and sociology, and the key to them is literature, the laboratory of myths. It is these subjects with which student activism is largely concerned. The sciences are to a degree impersonal, but the mythological subjects have to be more personally taught. There is always something of Mark Hopkins and the log about them, whereas the sciences can never dispense with complicated apparatus, and have nothing to do with any logs that do not roll.

We have to start again with the decline of the sense of continuity and teleology, already mentioned. Knowledge is, of course, and always must be, continuous and structured. A generation ago, this feature of knowledge was taken for granted, and the continuity of the university was accepted, even by the most radical, as a part of the general continuity of human existence. Much student unrest today springs from what is actually a very ancient conception, though not expressed now, so far as I know, in its traditional terms: the superiority of wisdom to knowledge. Knowledge is knowledge *of* something: wisdom is a sense of the potential rather than the actual, a practical knowledge ready to meet whatever eventualities may occur, rather than a specific knowledge of this or that subject. Formerly, wisdom was associated with seniority, it being assumed that experience carried with it a residual continuity which gave older people a fuller perspective. Or, as Yeats says, carrying the same principle one logical step further: 'Wisdom is the property of the dead.' The loss of belief in any form of continuity has led to a feeling of the necessity of breaking through the habits of knowledge. What many students today want is some guidance in how to deal with their own sense of the discontinuity in experience. Knowledge for them is propaedeutic: one needs only the minimum of knowledge that will introduce one to the great existential issues. After the three R's, the three A's: anxiety, alienation, absurdity. Instead of entering into a structure of knowledge, one seeks the higher wisdom through 'unstructured' means, chiefly informal discussion. In this quest the word 'dialogue' has acquired a portentous verbal magic, like the name of God.

This movement began with the impatience of students with instructors who regarded their teaching as a second-rate activity and an obstacle to research. As research is largely a matter of specialisation, this meant that the instructor who was bored by his teaching was really attaching social status to his ignorance rather than to his knowledge. The feeling that the quest for the esoteric needs to be pulled down periodically into the ordinary area of communication was undoubtedly normal and healthy, and throws a very different light on what C. P. Snow, in his account of the two cultures, stigmatised as the 'Luddite' attitude of the humanities. Humanists have to be Luddites to some extent, but what they are breaking are sometimes not machines but the cells of specialisation that are walled in from the human community.

But as the student protest went on, it tended to take an anti-intellectual form, to become, in its most extreme versions, a repudiation of the educational contract itself, a refusal to appeal to reason or experience or history or anything except emotional reflex. In its anti-intellectual form it joins on, naturally, to the anti-intellectualism of the past. Fifty years ago we had Stephen Leacock and his recipe for starting a university with informal discussions among students, going out to 'hire a few professors' when he got around to it. This in turn reflected the old Oxbridge mystique of the common room, the myth of the Sitting Bull, the rationalisation of the fact that for an ascendant class, as such, the point of a university education was in its social contacts rather than in its intellectual training. Its reappearance in our day is part of the general confusion among students about whether they want to be a privileged class or an intellectual proletariat.

What seems not to have been noticed is the fact that there is really no such thing as 'dialogue'. Just as some children try to behave like the heroes and heroines in the stories they read, so 'dialogue' is a literary convention taken to be a fact of life. The literary convention comes from Plato, and we notice how clearly aware Plato is of the fact that unstructured discussion is a collection of solipsistic monologues. The etymology of the word symposium points to the fact that the presence of liquor is necessary to make the members of such a group believe in their own wit. Nothing *happens* in Plato until one person, generally Socrates, assumes control of the argument and the contributions of the others are largely reduced to punctuation. This means, not that dialogue has turned into monologue or democracy into dictatorship, but that Socrates has discovered a dialectic, and has committed himself to following it wherever it may lead. From there on, Socrates and his listeners are united in a common vision of something which is supreme over both.

Education can take place only where there is communication, which means the conveying of information from a to b, or a discussion united by the presence of a specific subject. Such discussion is educational in proportion as it is structured. This takes us back to the principle that everything connected with the university, with education, and with knowledge, must be structured and continuous. Until this is grasped, there can be no question of learning to think for oneself. In education one cannot think at random. However imaginative we may be, and however hard we try to remove our censors and inhibitions, thinking is an acquired habit founded on practice, like playing the piano. How well we do it depends on how much of it we have done, and it is never autonomous. We do not start to think about a subject: we enter into a body of thought and try to add to it.

What is it, then, that the more restless and impatient students of our time are trying to break through their university training to get? I suggested earlier that they are seeking guidance to the existential questions which have largely overwhelmed what confidence they ever had in the discipline of thought. In other words, their quest is a religious one, and they are looking for answers to religious questions that the university, *qua* university, cannot answer. I do not mean by this that such students should be sent to the churches: the number of people there who can deal with their questions is no greater than it is in the universities, and they start from postulates that relatively few students accept. The scholar can deal with these questions only as a person, not as a scholar, but no one who would turn away a serious student on the ground that these questions were out of his field deserves the title of teacher. The professor in our day is in the same position as the modern doctor who has to try to cure *Weltschmerz* as well as bellyaches. The doctor may long for the simple old days when hysteria and hypochondria were specific disturbances of the womb or the abdomen, but he is not living in those days, and must struggle as best he can with the intangible.

Nothing seems less likely today than a return to the introspection of the Eisenhower decade, yet I cannot help feeling that such a return is just around the corner. Student unrest is not a genuinely social movement: it has no roots in a specific social injustice, as negro unrest has. It is not so much social as an aggregate of individual bewilderments, frustrations, disillusionments and egotisms. It takes patience to grant students everything that can be granted in the way of representation on decision-making bodies which are restructuring the curriculum, and to look with a friendly eye on the founding of 'free' universities, which, as just said, are really religious organisations. The reward of the patience is that students soon come to realise that these things are not what they want, and that, after every possible effort to climb over the walls has failed, there is no avenue of real escape except the open door in front of them.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

James Fenton

No Nonsense

When you come to think of it, English Poetry did not get off to a very promising start. So many problems had to be solved. For instance, what language should it be written in? French? Latin? A compromise?

Dum ludis floribus velut lacinia,
Le dieu d'amour me tient en tiel *angustia*;
Merour me tient de duel e de *miseria*,
Si je ne la ay *quam amo super omnia.*

This is part of a poem collected in Herefordshire (Harleian 2253) at the beginning of the 14th century. The last verse is remarkably like Ezra Pound:

Scripsi haec carmina in tabulis;
Mon ostel est en mi la vile de Paris.
May y sugge namore, so wel me is!
Yef hi deye for love of her, duel hit ys.

Suddenly, but only in the last two lines, it has occurred to the author to express himself in *English*. What a bright idea this must have seemed at the time.

Is it nonsense to suggest that one reason why there has been such a strong tradition of nonsense in English poetry is that, with the battle between the various languages in England after the Norman Conquest, there grew up an audience which was quite accustomed to the notion that poetry was gibberish? Certainly the nonsense theorists have noticed the tendency of our poetry to take leave of its senses when it comes to the refrain:

Rutterkin is come unto our town
In a cloak without coat or gown,
Save ragged hood to cover his crown,
Like a rutterkin, hoyda, hoyda!

Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin,
Hoyda, hoyda, like a rutterkin,
Hoyda, hoyda, hoyda, hoyda,
Like a rutterkin, hoyda!

What are all these intensely irritating hoydas about? Chambers and Sidgwick quote Rimbault who in turn quotes Hawkins's remark that this poem (Additional 5465) 'is supposed to be a satire on those drunken Flemings who came to England with the princess Anne of Cleves, upon her marriage with Henry VIII'. So:

Rutterkin can speak no English;
His tongue runneth all on buttered fish,
Besmeared with grease about his dish,
Like a rutterkin, hoyda, hoyda!

Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin, etc.

On the other hand, we are also asked to compare it with the exclamation by 'Courtly Abusyon' in the *Interlude of Magnyfycence*: 'Rutty bully, joly rutterkyn, heyda!' We pays our money and we takes our choice.

I suggest that English poetry got going when the question of language was resolved, but that the question 'Should it make any sense?' was never properly answered. Nonsense was not a form of poetry – it was a possible definition of poetry. It lingered on, in popular ballads, in children's songs, in magic and in religion. When the great poets succumbed to the temptation to write nonsense, they tended to set themselves up with excuses for doing so. Hence all the mad songs and dream songs, and hence the fools on the Elizabethan stage. Hence the story of the interruption of *Kubla Khan*, the greatest of these civilised nonsense poems. But outside the civilised world, there was never any problem in explaining why a piece of verse was inexplicable.

We cherish the inexplicable. It is for instance a common feature of many religions that their rituals have become incomprehensible to those who practise them. The reformers imagine that they must destroy this incomprehensibility. The Bible must be retranslated. The language of the church service must be modernised. And no doubt there are sound theological reasons for such reforms. But they do not earn the gratitude of all the congregation; many had come to the church precisely because they could not understand the service. They liked the idea that the priest could understand it, but they did not wish to understand it themselves. Their sense of hierarchy rebelled against comprehension. When the psalms talked of the noise of the waterpipes, when the collects used words like 'prevent' in ways that seemed to fly in the face of reason, when nobody knew the difference between cherubim and seraphim, let alone thrones and powers, *that* was as it should be. The religion was a mystery.

When I was a child, the line 'Thus spake the seraph and forthwith' held for me a terror and fascination. I had mis-heard it as 'The spake, the seraph and forthwith'. The spake I imagined to be some kind of flaming sword. It never occurred to me to ask why every day I wanted God to forgive me my trespasses. The word 'trespasses' was associated with the noise of opening a packet of Smith's Crisps. God, I sang, 'maketh the runagates to continue in scarceness'. One could speculate for hours about what runagates might be, and what God had against them.

Obsolete words and grammatical forms were kept alive by the church, and entered into the poetry of childhood with an ease and panache that will soon be forever lost:

Dearly beloved bretheren, is it not a sin
To peel the potatoes and throw away
the skin?
The skin feeds the pigs and the pigs
feed you.
Dearly beloved bretheren, is it not true?

The mockery of religious usage, which is as ancient a practice as the most ancient civilisations we know, was not considered blasphemous. It was a sign of being on good terms with one's religion. 'Our Father', we chanted, 'chart in heaven, Harold be thy name.' At Christmas we cut out the line 'Most highly favoured lady', and substituted, 'Most highly flavoured gravy'. The mind was always on the lookout for ways of subverting sense.

The first poetry we meet must surely be the most influential. The nursery rhyme, again a repository of antique usages and forgotten meanings, remains our prime model for the lyric. We liked the words and rhythms, we liked framing the stanzas, but the meaning was of little importance. Here is a song for a maypole dance:

The wind, the wind, the wind blows high.
The rain comes tumbling from the sky.
She is fair and she is pretty.
She's the girl from London City.
Shall I tell you who she is?
She comes down with a one, two, three.

This is not nonsense until the last line, but sense plays little part in it. It is not a poem about the weather, it is not a poem about a girl, it is a dance. It is indeed, a purely functional poem, like the following counting-rhyme:

Hinty, minty, cutie, corn.
Appleseed and apple thorn,
Wire, briar, limber, lock.
Three geese in a flock.
One flew east and one flew west.
One flew over the cuckoo's nest
Up on yonder hill . . .

and so on.

The romantic search for the origins of poetry caused a revival of interest in the non-classical epics, in the ballads and in primitive poetry in general. Not surprisingly, the poetry of childhood also came under scrutiny. Nonsense thus began to seem worthy of attention. The child is naïvely, the scholar consciously, in communion with the remotest history of his culture. What the scholar lacks in preserved records, the child has running through his mind. Blake, the first great author of children's poems, was aware of this. His own nonsense is quite startling:

Lo the Bat with Leathern wing,
Winking & blinking,
Winking & blinking,
Winking & blinking,
Like Doctor Johnson.

The repetition of the lines seems to lull us into a sense of security. We think we know what the poem is about. Then, bang! The completely inconsequential pay-off. It obviously belongs where we find it. It mirrors the rhythm of the previous line. But what on earth is the poem going to do next? Answer: introduce Scipio Africanus, for the sole apparent purpose of bringing in a vulgar rhyme. Or take the following dialogue between two voices:

1st Vo. 'Want Matches?'
2nd Vo. 'Yes, yes, yes.'
1st Vo. 'Want Matches?'
2nd Vo. 'No.'

That is the first verse. The second verse is identical. If one heard the poem recited, it might seem that the match-seller is doing well some of the time, but not as well the rest of the time. If on the other hand one reads it on the page, with Blake's directions, it seems infinitely pathetic. The matchseller is incapable of realising that

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he has a customer. The customer is incapable of making up his mind. And so it goes on, and on, and on – a poem which completely negates its own purposes, like the following little piece, which I have heard attributed to the Prince of Bonga-Bongo:

> Beautiful boxes.
> Pity they're wasted.
> What shall we do with them?
> Nothing at all.

For a moment, in this melancholy lyric, we imagine that there will be some bright idea. But no. There will be no bright idea. There is no worthy cause, no play-school down the road, no Friends of the Earth, no recycling scheme – only a complete moral waste and depression. Note by the way that both poems (if you take both stanzas of the first) have 20 syllables. They are exercises in pure rhythm. The first is a couplet in dactylic tetrameters with truncated last feet. The second is slightly different, but dactylic in principle.

With Lear and Carroll, nonsense becomes a self-conscious, civilised genre. There are two new Carroll books out this year. *The Wasp in a Wig,* a suppressed episode of *Through the Looking Glass* (edited by Martin Gardner, Macmillan £1.95), would make a pleasant giftette. It contains a new song in the familiar style:

> When I was young, my ringlets waved
> And curled and crinkled on my head:
> And then they said 'You should be shaved,
> And wear a yellow wig instead.'
>
> But when I followed their advice,
> And they had noticed the effect,
> They said I did not look so nice
> As they had ventured to expect.

Martin Gardner, in considering the sources of this poem, notes that the phrase 'ringlets waved' occurs in Milton:

> She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
> Her unadorned golden tresses wore
> Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
> As the vine curls her tendrils . . .

I should be surprised if Carroll spent much time reading such licentious muck as this passage. For the man who wanted to bowdlerise Bowdler, it must surely have been a bit strong. Gardner also has an essay in *Lewis Carroll Observed* (edited by Edward Guiliano and distributed by Hodder and Stoughton at £8.50) in which he quotes Carroll's reaction to *H.M.S. Pinafore.* At one point the captain says 'Damn me!' and a chorus of little girls sings, 'He said "Damn me".' Carroll thought this disgusting:

> I cannot find words to convey to the reader the pain I felt in seeing those dear children taught to utter such words to amuse ears grown callous to their ghastly meaning. Put the two ideas side by side – Hell (no matter whether *you* believe in it or not: millions do), and those pure young lips thus sporting with its horrors – and then find what fun in it you can! How Mr Gilbert could have stooped to write, or Sir Arthur Sullivan could have prostituted his noble art to set to music such vile trash, it passes my skill to understand.

For Carroll, his nonsense books were a kind of idyll in which such horrors could be excluded without difficulty.

By the end of the 19th century, while Nonsense had become established as a genre, a crisis was approaching in which the whole concept of art in the West would come into question, the crisis of modernism. It becomes difficult, in the space of a few years, to talk of a nonsense tradition any more. Nonsense sweeps the board. Carroll saw this coming, and prophesied as much in *Sylvie and Bruno* (the following extract is included in Paul Jennings's *Book of Nonsense,* Macdonald Raven Books £6.95 – a disappointing anthology, badly edited and printed, which contains comparatively little real nonsense, and a large amount of tawdry humorous writing):

> 'The day must come – if the world lasts long enough –' said Arthur, 'when every possible tune will have been composed – every possible pun perpetrated –' (Lady Muriel wrung her hands, like a tragedy-queen) 'and, worse than that, every possible *book* written! For the number of words is finite.'
>
> 'It'll make very little difference to the *authors,*' I suggested. 'Instead of saying "what book shall I write?" an author will ask himself "*which* book shall I write?" A mere verbal distinction!'
>
> Lady Muriel gave me an approving smile. 'But *lunatics* would always write new books, surely?' she went on. 'They *couldn't* write the same books over again!'
>
> 'True,' said Arthur. 'But their books would come to an end, also. The number of lunatic *books* is as finite as the number of lunatics.'
>
> 'And *that* number is becoming greater every year,' said a pompous man, whom I recognised as the self-appointed showman on the day of the picnic.
>
> 'So they say,' replied Arthur. 'And, when 90 per cent of us are lunatics,' (he seemed to be in a wildly nonsensical mood) 'the asylums will be put to their proper use.'
>
> 'And that is –?' the pompous man gravely enquired.
>
> '*To shelter the sane*!' said Arthur. '*We* shall bar ourselves in. The lunatics will have it all their own way, *outside.* They'll do it a little queerly, no doubt; steamers all blowing up; most of the towns will be burnt down; most of the ships sunk –'
>
> 'And most of the men *killed*!' murmured the pompous man, who was evidently hopelessly bewildered.
>
> 'Certainly,' Arthur assented. 'Till at last there will be *fewer* lunatics than sane men. Then *we* come out; they go in; and things return to their normal condition.'

Alas, in poetry as in politics, the last part of the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled.

Jonathan Raban

Misericords

A Little Order *by* EVELYN WAUGH edited by Donat Gallagher *Eyre Methuen* £5.95

Officially, Evelyn Waugh took the popular view that journalism was a very low trade indeed and that journalists were witless toadies. Unofficially, his writing tells an altogether different story. It is not just that Waugh was an unusually effective journalist himself, or that in *Scoop* he produced the funniest novel ever written about the Street of Shame. It is that his fiction is deeply rooted in the style and method of journalism. When he went to work for Beaverbrook for a seemingly unproductive few months in 1927, he learned more of his craft as a novelist than, understandably, he would ever care to admit. It is Mr Chatterbox's gossip column (Tom Driberg's William Hickey) which supplies the basic style in which *Vile Bodies* is written. The most telling connection, though, is the way that Waugh's novels are built – like feature articles – around topics. Several of them, including *Black Mischief* and *The Loved One,* had already been worked over in journalism before Waugh sat down to fantasticate them in fiction. All of them tend to subordinate their characters to an essentially journalistic argument and have plots which resemble nothing so much as the point-by-point structure of the didactic article.

Journalism, with its bald simplicities and violent logic, suited Waugh's temperament. Impatient of the shades and ambiguities which absorb most novelists, he craved for certitude and clarity. Catholic theology partially satisfied this craving; so did Waugh's mad, parodic brand of high toryism. In the arts, he loved whatever was simple, elegant and clear-cut – virtues that he first tried to practise in his own drawings, and later discovered in the work of an oddly assorted crew of modern heroes, like Harold Lloyd, P. G. Wodehouse, Max Beerbohm and Mgr Ronald Knox ('No major writer in our history has ever shown such an extent of accomplishment'). He had a neurotic antipathy to the mess and clutter of modern life and, like a demented housewife, he wanted to tidy, straighten and stuff as much of this bungled civilisation as he could into garbage bags. His saving genius lay in his anarchic sense of humour and his manic glee in pure invention; otherwise, one can imagine that he might have been most happily employed in the writing of pamphlets for the Catholic Truth Society.

It was the absolute logic of Catholicism – its reductive, icy clarity – that held Waugh's imagination. He used theology like an axe and tried to chop his way out of the confusions of the modern world. When he recalled his conversion, he wrote of how he was admitted to the church 'on firm intellectual conviction but with little emotion' Father Martin D'Arcy, who instructed him in 1930, later said of his pupil:

> He was a man of very strong convictions and a clear mind. He had convinced himself very unsentimentally – with only an intellectual passion, of the truth of the Catholic faith and that in it he must save his soul. . . . He was perhaps inclined to be too literal about The Last Things, and the message of the Gospel.

If Catholicism supplied Waugh with a line of cold, and often preposterous, logic

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journalism offered him its most natural form of expression. The short paragraph, the authoritarian insistence of points (a) and (b) and (c), the flying leap between the second and third stages of the syllogism, the shocking simplicity of the conclusion, would have been anathema to almost any other imaginative writer one can think of. For Waugh, these rigid procedures were like the elegant discipline of the sonnet; they bore a fearsome correspondence to the way in which he instinctively thought about things.

Even before his conversion, the habit of mind is clearly there. For a *Spectator* article on 'War and the Younger Generation', published in 1929, he was writing:

> In the social subsidence that resulted from the War a double cleft appeared in the life of Europe, dividing it into three perfectly distinct classes between whom none but the most superficial sympathy can ever exist. There is (a) the wistful generation who grew up and formed their opinions before the War and who were too old for military service; (b) the stunted and mutilated generation who fought; and (c) the younger generation.

The giveaway words are 'perfectly' and 'can ever', betraying both the pleasure and the prescriptive vehemence of a man who first chops up the world in order to make a pretty pattern, then dares it to reassemble itself on pain of logical excommunication. Indeed, here as elsewhere in Waugh's work, logic and aesthetics are cunningly scrambled: the one being used as an instrument of law enforcement to protect the other.

Thirty years later, in a *Daily Mail* piece called 'I See Nothing But Boredom . . . Everywhere', Waugh was tickling his readers with this announcement: 'I must confess that I face the immediate future with gloomy apprehensions . . .' Tame enough, that. Was the old white rhino off form?

> I am not the least nervous about the much-advertised threats of the nuclear scientists: First, because I can see nothing objectionable in the total destruction of the earth, provided it is done, as seems most likely, inadvertently . . .

Waugh takes three more sentences to dispose of the holocaust on theological grounds, then goes on to prove at length that the world faces a far greater threat: Waugh, it turns out, should be earning £20,750 a year in order to continue to live in the manner to which he was accustomed in the 1930s; actually, he finds it 'hard work to earn half that amount'. This was the kind of stuff for which editors – and readers too – were baying: Waugh was an institutionalised monster, half shibboleth, half figure of fun. He was, in a word more usually applied to stand-up club comedians than to novelists, 'outrageous'; and it was enjoyably hard to tell whether he was just joking or whether he really meant the awful things he said.

Theological jokes are hard to decode in a secular world, as Waugh well knew. They are not even exactly jokes. Their humour, as they shove the little, mutable universe of man in humiliating proximity to God's eternity, is cold and literal. They have the deadly seriousness of slapstick; they have no truck with civilised irony. In his introduction to this collection, Donat Gallagher summarises an unreprinted piece by Waugh, calling it 'an article on Wilberforce, point-

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ing out some of the advantages of slavery'. The formulation sounds like Swift, just as Waugh's Augustan clarity of style often superficially resembles Swift's. (He was once commissioned to write Swift's biography.) But Waugh is not like Swift at all. His immodest proposals, though they masquerade in cap and bells, are totally in earnest. He is an ironic writer only in the lightest social and conversational sense: the heart of his comedy is knockabout farce, while its soul is pure theological ice. He 'means' his indifference to the holocaust, just as he 'means' his hatred of Tito, his horror at the imminent collapse of the class system, or his observation that almost the only benefit to be derived from the invention of photography is its revelation of the stains on the Holy Shroud of Turin. In all these subjects he also found something grotesquely funny. No doubt God does too.

When we think of 'Christian' writers, Waugh does not immediately leap to mind. He is a millennium away from the gentle, forgiving, modernist, ecumenical version of Christianity; much closer in spirit to the cruel piety of the gothic monk carving gargoyles and misericords. His Manichean sensibility, with its broad choleric humour, comes out most clearly in his book reviews. He gloats over the sumptuous binding and fine paper of a Dropmore Press edition of *The Holkham Bible*; he treats a little book of homilies by Mgr Knox in a manner that verges on idolatry; on Cyril Connolly and Stephen Spender he turns into a jeering Inquisitor, showing rather too lingering a pleasure as he tears their wings off with his fingers one by one. At the same time, his carefully constructed tortures are so craftsmanly that one relishes them even in spite of their unfairness.

> At one stage in his life Mr Spender took to painting and, he naïvely tells us, then learned the great lesson that 'it is possible entirely to lack talent in an art where one believes oneself to have creative feelings'. It is odd that this never occurred to him while he was writing, for to see him fumbling with our rich and delicate language is to experience all the horror of seeing a Sèvres vase in the hands of a chimpanzee.

In this review of *World Within World*, Waugh handles Spender with exactly the same slow, delighted malignity that he accords to Atwater in *Work Suspended* – one of the most brilliant and relatively neglected of his fictions. The narrator of that novella (Waugh rarely used the first person) is himself oddly monkish; pious in the exercise of his narrow craft, at one remove from the modern world. Waugh's journalism is, in one sense, a further fleshing-out of the character of John Plant.

This selection of what Waugh called his 'beastly little articles' is regrettably meagre. An essay on Venice and the superb piece on Forest Lawn Cemetery which became the springboard for *The Loved One* do not fairly represent Waugh's travel writing. Nor has Mr Gallagher dredged up anything from the period in 1927 when Waugh was a full-time Beaverbrook hack (did his name ever appear in the *Express* at that time?). Within the cramped space at his disposal, Mr Gallagher has got together a fair spread of different kinds of writing, but his preference is for the formal essay over the newspaper 'feature'. Given the way in which Waugh's novels derive from and treat daily journalism, it might have been more interesting if the balance had been tipped in the opposite direction. Mr Gallagher's own editorial matter is usefully informative, but written as if in mud with a cleft stick. His suggestion that the *Spectator* 'is the favourite reading matter of Church of England clergymen' is entertaining, but suspect. In my experience, they prefer the *Investor's Chronicle, Yachting Monthly* and *The Vole*.

John Bayley

Ababccddeffegg

Eugene Onegin by ALEXANDER PUSHKIN translated by Charles Johnston £4.50 (Orders forwarded by Scolar Press)

No poet has succeeded in imitating the metre of *Evgeny Onegin* successfully, even in Russian. Pushkin seems to have hit on his new stanza form by regularising a more or less chance arrangement that occurs in the *contes* of La Fontaine, from which Pushkin, like other Russian poets before him, had derived the tetrameter measure of their narrative poems. In the introduction to his edition Nabokov gives a lively account of the characteristic movement of this *ababccddeffegg* pattern, observing that whereas the beginning and end of the stanza are always conspicuous, in terms of meaning and melody, they form a frieze like that on a painted ball or top which is fully visible only at the beginning and end of the spin. When moving fast in mid-course 'the fluent and variable phrasing blurs the contours of the lines so that they are seldom seen as clearly consisting of two couplets and a closed quatrain'.

The variety possible within the stanza, particularly in its unstable and more seemingly improvised inner section, could be compared with the dramatic fascination and elusiveness of Shakespeare's sonnets, which have been interpreted even more assiduously than Pushkin's poem; and perhaps for the same reason, that the author is too busy to be authoritative, and escapes at every moment into the new patterns of the structure he is creating. Hence a wholly undetermined and relative viewpoint is a built-in aspect of the exigence of the form, and is the consequence of each new, ever-recurring crisis, compromise and solution. The authors of a successful fiction in verse – Pushkin or Shakespeare – don't have to abide our question, only those imposed by their medium. It is not surprising that the response that Formalist criticism considered most adequate in reply to the challenge of such a work as *Evgeny Onegin* is that 'the perception of its form reveals the content of the work'. By contrast, Browning had to build the relative viewpoint himself into the inert and open medium of *The Ring and The Book*, appending an all too appropriate significance and message.

Evgeny Onegin is certainly a formalist's paradise, a paradise which is apt to vanish when the form is transported into another language. A Russian critic tells us that the poem is not the story of Tatyana and Onegin but 'a game with this fable'. Perfectly true, though hardly conclusive: we might equally say that Jane Austen has a game with the Bennet family and Mr Darcy, but a game that plays with such a story also has meanings, however much they are seen through the looking-glass. Games have complicated rules, one of which is the reality-rule: indeed many of Jane Austen's original readers found her *too* real, banally faithful to the minutiae of daily living; and Pushkin, too, was blamed for letting Onegin and Tatyana, her heart breaking after her rejection by him, walk back to the house round the vegetable garden. As all successful anti-novelists – Chaucer, Sterne, Pushkin, Jane Austen – have shown, one way to be most 'like life' is to be master of the kind of art that can best play with it.

But any suggestion of a game is apt to disappear in the fearful labour of trying to translate the poem. By transposing Pushkinian style into his own idiosyncratic kind of style Nabokov succeeded in conveying the element of *jouissance*, but at the cost of changing all the rules, inventing quite a different sort of game, in fact. Of those brave souls who gritted their teeth, attempted the original stanza, and stuck bravely to the nauseous task of finding cavorting English disyllables to stumble after the Russian's fleet-footed rhymes, the most workmanlike was possibly Oliver Elton, a good many years ago. But now something like a miracle has happened. Without any parade of novelty or claiming to succeed where so many others have failed, Charles Johnston has achieved a quite remarkably dexterous, supple and idiomatic translation in the *Onegin* stanza which is not only graceful where Pushkin is, and rises to the humour of the original, but – most difficult of all – can actually move us at those moments of hesitant clarity where Pushkin (again like Shakespeare) seems himself too moved to step quite as adroitly as usual; as in the famous stanza near the end of the poem, where the couple meet again.

> However closely he inspected
> There was no trace to be detected
> of the old Tatyana. Eugene tried
> to talk to her, but language died.
> How long he'd been there, was her query,
> and where had he arrived from, not
> from their own country? Then she shot
> across to her consort a weary
> regard, and slipped away for good . . .
> with Eugene frozen where he stood.

'Shot' calls a bit more attention to itself than it should, as English rhymes are apt to do, but it is actually the right word for this tricky situation, in which violent feeling is almost but not quite successfully masked by Tatyana. 'Arrived from, not/ from their own country' is an admirable rendering of the casualness she aims for, and achieves, except for what Nabokov called 'the ghost of a stutter', the flurried ungraceful syllables of the Russian *I ne iz ikh li uzh storon*?

In this version all the Pushkinian detail is got in without too much appearance of

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cramming and the accuracy is as great as the need for rhyme will allow. The loading of the pistols for the duel goes with the original's jerky precision:

> Pistols are out, they gleam, the hammer
> thumps as the balls are pressed inside
> faceted muzzles by the rammer;
> with a first click, the catch is tried.

Pushkin's sly parodies of 'romantic' poetry come over particularly well, but all the general tone is right: relaxed and seeming not to try too hard, modulating easily from the conversational to the elegiac, and idiomatic to just the proper extent that enhances elegance but avoids a modernising vulgarity. The touch is right that leaves *Nyanya* instead of dropping this sonorous term into English: Nanny or – worse still – *Nursie*.

> Tanya (profoundly Russian being,
> herself not knowing how or why)
> in Russian winters thrilled at seeing
> the cold perfection of the sky,
> hoar-frost and sun in freezing weather,
> sledges and tardy dawns together
> with the pink glow the snows assume . . .

That is a run-of-the-mill sample of the effectiveness of the translation, and it is a great deal more difficult to do than it looks. In fact, that it seems quite natural is the measure of Charles Johnston's unpretending but very real success.

Eric Sams

Muddy Water

Debussy on Music: Critical Writings collected and introduced by François Lesure, translated and edited by Richard Langham Smith *Secker & Warburg* £6.90

It doesn't take a Socrates to work out that writing and thinking about music will be best performed by those who are best at writing and thinking; hence the pre-eminence of (say) Shaw and Schopenhauer, respectively. Yet composers have also made their voices heard, often at full volume; thus Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Cornelius and Wolf, as well as Debussy, have all left extensive prose writings. It's no accident that each one was a specialist in verbo-musical ideas, or that this hybrid evolved and flourished in the 19th century. It was then that music and words first became really intimate; and the letters and notes they exchanged still delight the Romantically-minded. That category often includes the artist-critic, who tends to tell his own personal story. Eliciting a composer's opinions on music is like sounding out an Artesian well's views on hydraulics; the result is a spontaneous outpouring of the purely subjective element.

Debussy is totally typical. As this book puts it, he places his immediate reactions at the centre of his writings. Further, his prose composition is very like his music; nuanced and laconic, yet direct and intense. And here, in 350 well-produced pages, including about 100 of notes and commentary, is the most complete collection of his writings and reported sayings about music ever published in any language. So all students or devotees of Debussy will thirst after these new sources, whether for detailed analysis or simple refreshment.

But I fear that the waters have been so muddied as to be obscure or unpalatable. Not even the publishers can quite make out whether Mr Smith is an editor (title-page) or just a translator (end-papers). Copyright is claimed only in the latter function; and the catalogue description misleadingly implies that the work is in fact a straight translation of *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits*, 1971. But even a quick flick suggests that Mr Smith must be responsible for some of the notes; thus a French editor would hardly have garbled Vigny's best-known line, let alone ascribed it to Lamartine (p.162).

Closer comparison confirms that the copious glosses, often of only surface application, are indeed mainly Mr Smith's, though some of the original notes have been adopted or adapted. The introduction offers an oblique pointer to these wayward proceedings, which should surely have been far more carefully signposted. 'For the English reader the book should fulfill [*sic*] a very different function from the French scholar's Ur-text, and the text has been amplified with material that fills in the background. . .' But even the primary material has been chopped and changed about, both tastelessly and unfittingly. Taking a hint from the blurb, I checked the well-known 1901 review of a Mussorgsky song-cycle (Lesure 1971, p.29) as having special interest and relevance. I found that nearly a score of Debussy's words are just omitted, while over a score of Mr Smith's own words are included, together with some equally gratuitous punctuation. The style and significance of the original are correspondingly distorted.

Further comparisons on other pages all yielded similar malpractices and misreadings. As the translator's foreword incautiously observes, 'those searching for a clear picture of the composer's artistic tastes will frequently be frustrated . . .' Instead of Debussy on Music, as announced, here comes Mr Smith on Debussy; and one wishes he would dismount. In my judgment he loses points heavily for repeated refusals to confront the obstacles of translation fairly and squarely; and no amount of hopeful cantering round the periphery can compensate for those fatal faults.

A. J. P. Taylor

The Black Book

Salome's Last Veil: The Libel Case of the Century by MICHAEL KETTLE *Granada* £8.95

The suit for criminal libel by Maud Allan, stage dancer, against Noel Pemberton Billing, Independent MP, in 1918 undoubtedly provided the finest legal entertainment of the 20th century, transcending even that of the Rev. Harold Davidson, Rector of Stiffkey. Billing was a wild patriot, convinced that the Germans were aided by perverts in high places. When Wilde's play *Salome* was given a private performance – and when it was proposed to trundle the play round Europe as an example of British culture – Billing saw that his chance had come: here was sexual corruption at work.

Billing was aided by Captain Spencer, former British intelligence officer, who had been discharged from the army after being certified insane. Spencer revealed to Billing that there was a German Black Book containing the names of 47,000 British perverts in the political and social worlds. Spencer also wrote the attack on Maud Allan who had played Salome. Unable to accuse her of being a sodomite, the usual term of abuse, he consulted a local doctor who provided a sensational title, The Cult of the Clitoris. Such was the innocence of those days that both Mr Justice Darling, who presided at the trial, and the prosecuting counsel had to be enlightened as to the meaning of the word. They were also in the dark about 'orgasm' and 'sadism'.

Further reinforcement came from Mrs Villiers-Stuart, another intelligence agent, who was instructed to discredit Billing by luring him into a homosexual brothel. Instead, she informed him that she had actually seen the Black Book. She had been shown it by Neil Primrose, her alleged lover. Subsequently, the British authorities had arranged Primrose's death in Palestine. In fact he died fighting gallantly, though this did not come out at the trial.

Mrs Villiers-Stuart was Billing's star witness. Although she had only turned over

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the pages of the Black Book, she was able to recall the name of almost any prominent figure mentioned. Mr and Mrs Asquith were in the Book. So was Mr Justice Darling, who expressed no surprise at his inclusion. Captain Spencer discoursed on the sexual frenzy provoked by the cult of the clitoris. A doctor held forth at length on sadism, a theme he had learnt from the works of Krafft-Ebing. Lord Alfred Douglas, once Wilde's catamite, who had translated *Salome* into English, now appeared as a reformed character, testifying that Wilde had written *Salome* with the deliberate purpose of sexual corruption.

The case was accompanied by constant uproar. Billing, who conducted his own defence, disregarded all the rules of evidence and denounced Darling's attempts to check him as giving deliberate assistance to the German enemy. Loud applause from the public galleries followed each of Billing's outbursts. Towards the end, Billing, who had pleaded justification, withdrew his charge that Maud Allan was a lesbian. His plea of justification therefore failed. Darling, however, did not remark on this and the jury acquitted Billing.

Such was the case of the Black Book. Billing, though crazy, was a formidable litigant. Darling prided himself on his wit and was delighted to be told that George Robey was the darling of the music hall. This time Darling's wit miscarried. It is said that the case showed the hysteria of the British people in the last year of the first world war. In all probability a firmer judge would have blown Billing's case to pieces in no time.

Mr Kettle gives a fuller account of the case than has ever been given before, and every word is a delight. Clearly he does not think that there was anything in Billing's case. There was no German Black Book; there were no sexual perverts in high places, or not more than the usual number; there was no plot. However, Mr Kettle has discovered two plots of his own in which Billing played a subordinate part. The first was the Generals' plot which was designed to supersede civilian authority by a military triumvirate – Sir William Robertson, formerly CIGS; Colonel Repington, military correspondent of *The Times*; and General Maurice, formerly DMO. Maurice had fired the first shot by his letter to *The Times* which accused Lloyd George of lying about the strength of the British army in France. Mr Kettle thinks the accusations well-founded. However that may be, Lloyd George triumphed in the House of Commons by revealing that the figures he gave had been supplied by Maurice's own department.

Billing was then pushed into action by the conspirators to undo the effects of Maurice's failure. It is difficult to understand how civilian authority could be discredited by accusations of sexual perversity against Asquith, leader of the Opposition and the generals' friend, while no such accusations were made against Lloyd George, the Prime Minister. But let that pass. All plots have loose ends.

There was also a plot by the politicians. Lloyd George and Bonar Law were designing to make a compromise peace with the Germans, disguised as negotiations in Holland over the exchange of prisoners of war. They trembled at the patriotic protests that Billing would make and therefore pushed Maud Allan into taking action in the belief that Billing would be discredited. They even, it seems, rigged the case beforehand. In Mr Kettle's words, 'The Pemberton Billing case . . . was basically a struggle between Billing and Bonar Law.' The politicians' plot also miscarried. There was no compromise peace. Billing emerged more formidable than ever and plagued the government throughout the remainder of the war by a campaign demanding the internment of all aliens.

In a sense, however, Pemberton Billing should be acclaimed as the man who won the war. The reports of the case aroused such hilarity in the trenches that the soldiers were inspired to withstand the great German onslaught of April to July 1918 and then to launch their own offensive, which carried the Allied armies to final victory.

Gavin Ewart

Clunk Clique

The Leavises, the 'Social', and the Left by GARRY WATSON *Brynmill* £4.50

This book was refused by London publishers, it is claimed, because it is 'very much too hot a potato to be handled by the London literary world it discusses'. Unless you are one of those argued against, or sensitive on their behalf (Clive James, Martin Amis, John Gross, Peter Porter, etc. – 'media boys' – or Kermode, Lerner, Donoghue, Williams, Davie, Carey, etc. – suspect academics), I would say you needn't worry. It's more like cold mashed potato (and professorial wrangling) than anything hot: who wrote what about whom in 1935, and Stephen Spender as 'a major British Council export' (F. R. Leavis's phrase). Criticism of criticism, reviewing of reviews, quoting from essays, from letters, every second word between inverted commas; it is not to be recommended to the common reader.

The purpose is to show that the Leavises are 'major writers' and 'representative geniuses'. The targets are artificial writing, writing for effect, and in-writing (C. James very guilty); the weeklies are 'the enemies of art and life'. Meanwhile, F. R. Leavis has written: 'the only dissent hazarded by Mr Bateson is that he remains "impenitent" about Auden – and he has done nothing to make that impenitence respectable.' 'This', writes Dr Garry Watson, 'is certainly witty but it is not wit indulged in for its own sake.' Christ.

I am just as much a 'case' as Professor Spender, and my own experiences throw some light on the whole business. In 1932, when I was 16, T. C. Worsley, my English master at Wellington, gave me *New Bearings in English Poetry* to read, *The Loosening* (Ronald Bottrall's book of verse) and *Scrutiny*. I also read the criticism of Arnold, Eliot and I. A. Richards. Eliot's *Poems 1909-25* I knew, but not Pound. I owed my introduction to Pound's work, and my attitude to the Georgians, entirely to Leavis. Later, when I was a student at Cambridge in 1936, Dr Leavis was my supervisor. I found him a good teacher, particularly when the poetry of the past was under discussion; on contemporary work, which is always difficult to judge, I didn't altogether trust him. Spender's *Poems* of 1933 did contain the element that he described as 'the glamorous-ineffable-vague', but it also contained poems of some realism and pathos (about the unemployed, for example). I couldn't understand why he didn't think more highly of Auden.

When the war came, in the course of moving round Europe and North Africa in the Royal Artillery, I read such things as *War and Peace*, Dante, *Evelina*; like most literate serving soldiers, that is, I concentrated on the large-scale works of the past. To read criticism in situations where you might quite easily die the next day would have seemed a waste of time. By the end of the war I was 30. I settled down to read Proust and as much Henry James as I could lay hands on. I didn't feel the need to read Leavis, or critical works of any kind.

I knew that the books kept on coming; I thought there might even be a Great Tradition; I agreed that Conrad, James, George Eliot, Dickens and Lawrence were good writers. But I didn't want to be *told* this over and over again (there is a repetitiousness about Leavis that is like the repetitiousness of Lawrence – reading *The Rainbow* is like reading the same novel three times). When you are 20, you can be told what to read, and profit from it. By the time you're 30 you ought to be able to make up your own mind.

On the credit side, the Leavises have done a lot to undermine snobbery and pretension; Mrs Leavis's deflation of Virginia Woolf's assumption, in *Three Guineas*, that every educated woman must be a 'lady' was very necessary. There are of course cliques – centred in London, Edinburgh, Oxford, Cambridge, Belfast, Dublin. There are reviewers of poetry who devote columns inches to deriding the photographs of the poets on the book jackets. There are literary commentators who look good (or fairly good) on television but don't do much else. There is continual trivialisation of literature by personal gossip (it is better to read *Eminent Victorians* than to speculate about Strachey and Carrington).

The seriousness of the Leavises is valuable, even if you mistrust the judgments of somebody who dismisses Auden and Joyce. Reviews are only first impressions and long-term standards would be nice to have but you can't grade literary works, like eggs, in seven different sizes. Academics, much as media men, have a vested interest in commenting on art, rather than producing it. Otherwise, where would their jobs be? Before we become too serious we should remember that great art is often accidental. Shakespeare never heard of a Great Tradition: he was a man who wrote plays, to amuse the idle.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Coleman

Reeling Off

Big Banana Feet (AA) *Rialto*
The Hiding Place (A) *Classic 4, Oxford Street*
Death is Child's Play (X) *Classic 4, Oxford Street*
The Black Panther (X) *Plaza 3, from 26 December*
The Bad News Bears in Breaking Training (A) *Plaza 2, from 26 December*

'You've made an old man feel very old.' That – and apologies all round – is how a line from Marty Feldman's *The Last Remake of Beau Geste* came off my machine in last week's piece. The first epithet should, of course, have been 'happy'. Notwithstanding (after, in fact, a great deal of sitting), it may well serve in its botched form as epigraph to what follows. Perhaps I am being unduly gloomy. After all, there is one cracker just arrived in the West End that everyone is cordially invited to open, Murray Grigor and Patrick Higson's *Big Banana Feet*, a 77-minute documentary on the phenomenal Scots comedian, Billy Connolly.

The occasion was a courageous tour he made in Ireland a couple of years ago. Deploying a Glaswegian accent you could cut with a haggis, this hairy man, constantly parting his Messianic locks between giggles, strumming away rather well on banjo or guitar, interrupts a flow of scabrous songs with monologue material that stems from primary school insecurities and sounds invented on the spot. It is often about urinals, farts and snot – crude homely stuff – but done with a speed and flair that convert breath into laughter: he is a sort of lenitive Bruce of Scotland. From the risky area of his home country's football crowds, he can produce appalling, releasing anecdotes: one fragment that took my fancy brings in a terrace drunk, bawling abuse, 'usually accompanied by a mouthful of cold pie and Bovril'. This is not going to be acceptable to all and Mr Connolly has learnt a way with hostile elements in his audience: his nose narrows and he fairly flails the barracker.

Off-stage but still on camera, Connolly stays intensely alive and attractive, whether putting down some tea-ladies for the slow-pouring spout they provide in his dressing-room (they love it) or disembarking from a plane, laden with luggage: 'As soon as the cameras stop, you can take the heavies,' to his entourage. Forget the tremendous brogue. For those who can support it, his humour is universal.

A new quadruple cinema 'complex', to be known as Classic 4, has just opened in Oxford Street. Its four theatres will show 'a wide range of films', from Children's Film Foundation screenings through new British independent movies to late-night rock follies. So runs the publicity and good luck. What I have pre-seen so far leaves me with a cautiously watching brief. *The Hiding Place*, directed by James F. Collier, is a long, inspirational event with Billy Graham's evangelical empire somewhere, one imagines, in the funding of it. Based on the 'true-life' and bloody dreadful war-time experiences of one Corrie ten Boom, a brave lady who – together with her family – harboured Jews on the run in Holland's Haarlem before being carted off to horrors in Ravensbruck, it tells its harrowing tale without pulling many punches. Julie Harris, however, plays Corrie's saintly sister to the hilt and beyond: as a non-believer, I would surely have found her the piece that passeth all understanding had I been a fellow-concentration-camper. Jeannette Clift is thoroughly respectable as Corrie and the lady herself, now in her very lively declining years, appears in an epilogue addressed to camera. She escaped, it emerges, by a clerical error (no pun intended): those who discern a divine hand therein will probably suffer this competent recreation in the right spirit.

Elsewhere in the Classic complex – a word which begins to take on overtones – is an unpleasant Spanish fantasy-thriller, *Death is Child's Play*, unevenly directed by N. Ibanez Serrador, technically erratic, linguistically silly and reasonably described by its title. It concerns kids taking their revenge on all the evils we (you? I?) have bequeathed to them in the modern world. Even a babe stirring in a freckled-faced young English tourist's womb knows how to do mum in, apparently. It has its spooky moments, but they were not mine. Thank God one can't take the kids. Our censor's no fool.

More Xmas merriment in Ian Merrick's *The Black Panther*, which is one of those would-be faithful reconstructions of a criminal and his crimes that serve no purpose I can descry, other than to line someone's pockets. The abduction and murder of Lesley Whittle by Donald Neilson, who had previously gunned down several sub-post-masters, is the subject. A psychiatrist is said to have checked and approved the draft screenplay. Why not? It reveals nothing useful about motives and little in the way of behavioural quirks. Neilson is presented (by Donald Sumpter, a tolerable look-alike) as a keep-fit fanatic, abrupt with his wife and daughter, obsessed with things military, given to weeping and then getting furious for doing so at pathetic TV films. The chill at the start is excellently done, our eyes directed to details: razor-blades being shoved into a shoe, a lighter; the rows of quotidian groceries displayed in a village shop; Neilson's preparation of a secret forest lair.

And then, somehow, nothing: all interest seeps away, to be replaced by a wearied sense of frustration, anger, disgust. And it is really not good enough to have the psychopath with an ulcer staring, in frozen-frame, at me as a close: I will *not* accept him as my fault, any more than those marauding Spanish children.

Nor does my heart warm to the mini-adults, which may be understood to include absolutely everyone connected with its making, in *The Bad News Bears in Breaking Training*. The original, from which this is not so much a spin-off as a disastrous dive into nether regions of the collective unconsciousness, was directed by Michael Ritchie and had Walter Matthau and Tatum O'Neal to give it further professionalism. This is misguided by Michael Pressman, unless your pulse-beat rises – as mine irritatingly did a bit – during a slam-bang finale at the Houston Astrodome, with consistent inadequacy throughout. The sloppy gang of Little League baseballers is offered as sexually precocious to a midget, improbably en route to a big day in Texas in a stolen bus but without a coach, leering at nubile hitchhikers and eagerly thumbing *Playboy*. Their new, hopeless pitcher is called Carmen and I was sure of feminine gender until I cast a red eye over the credits: Jimmy Baio, it says. There is an atrocious thread of sentimentality, linking tough-kid Kelly (Jackie Earle Haley again) with his long-lost dad (William Devane) who shows every tooth in his head as last-minute trainer and saviour. Too late.

So what did *you* do in the year, daddy? I was afraid you might ask that, son. To begin with, I saw far too much of a fellow by the name of Richard Harris. He was on a train in *The Cassandra Crossing*, in pain in *Echoes of a Summer*, in vain in *Gulliver's Travels*, in the main in *Orca* and again there, on the wane, in *Golden Rendezvous*. His three expressions hardly changed. He is a star. Did you enjoy any of his films, daddy? No more questions, son. There's work to do.

Running from January to December, my list of likeable, exciting, entertaining or plain worthy movies would go like this. Several of them are barnacled with reservations and buts. Ritt's *The Front*; Mel Brooks's *Silent Movie*; Satyajit Ray's *The Middle Man*; Mazursky's *Next Stop, Greenwich Village*; Costa-Gavras's *Section Spéciale*; Bellocchio's *In The Name of the Father*; Terry Gilliam's *Jabberwocky*; *Silver Streak*; *Pleasure at Her Majesty's*; John G. Avildsen's *Rocky* (and Sylvester Stallone's, of course); Rosi's *Illustrious Corpses*; Michael Schultz's black *Car Wash*; Truffaut's *Small Change*; Tavernier's *The Watchmaker of Saint-Paul*; Volker Schlöndorff's *Coup de Grâce*; Robert Benton's *The Late Show*; Alain Tanner's *The Middle of the World*; Woody Allen's *Annie Hall*; *Pumping Iron* (with the ineffable and barely pronounceable Arnold Schwarzenegger); the brothers Taviani's *Padre Padrone*; Goretta's *The Lace-Maker*; *Star Wars*; maybe it wasn't such a wasted twelve months passed in the dark. Already I sense a handful more waving for a little attention, but that will have to do.

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Critic's Castle

The Alchemist *Aldwych*
Pinch Me Not *Greenwich*
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight *Lyttelton*
The Gingerbread Man *Old Vic*
The Magic Man *Mayfair*
Drake's Dream *Shaftesbury*

What better gift can Santa bring a rheumy critic than proof of his discernment? The grapevine was worried about RSC's *Alchemist*. It whispered, in its sour way, that the cast had been discomforted by the decision of the director, Trevor Nunn, to go on a cultural junket to Moscow in the last days of rehearsal, and that the poor darlings were convinced that what had worked very well on the Stratford fringe would never conquer the wide open spaces of the Aldwych. But the grapevine was wrong, and I was wonderfully right when I pleaded for the production's transfer to London. The one sad loss is Mike Gwilym, who had nicely transformed Surly into a flash Wardour-Street slouch with a toothpick dangling indolently down the nether slopes of his smirking countenance; but the qualities he represented are still abundantly on display. Nunn's resuscitating touch rejects those loud, lumpish effects so often (and so wrongly) dignified as Jonsonian 'humours' in favour of nuance and detail, precision of characterisation and a plausible sense of place. It is as if some spectrally skilled TV director, his eye on the Italia prize of 1610, had moved a camera crew into the conmen's eyrie and persuaded its population to be as natural as possible: *Thysse Weeke*, the which doth ruthlesslie expose ranke mischief in our midst . . .

The documentary feel is established right at the start, with street cries of 'who wants fresh lavender?' and, more ominously, 'bring out your dead'. Offstage, it is London in a plague year, and onstage two nasty and dangerous men are quarrelling over their plunder, faces mottled above sweaty, grubby vests. It is, clearly enough, a sharpish shift from theatrical tradition, which has long tended to see *The Alchemist* as a yeomanly frolic in which Norman Wisdom and Frankie Howerd join forces to outwit an all-star cast led by Kenneth Williams and Kenneth Connor, and it carries an obvious risk. Isn't the laughter likely to calcify in our collective throats when the vultures close in on the gulls and peck bits off them? Under the circumstances, can we really be amused by Roger Rees's babbling Ananias, forever clambering on to chairs and slavering out homage to puritan orthodoxy? Or even by Paul Brooke's Sir Epicure Mammon, a phlegmatic plodder whose aldermanic front conceals an anarchic imagination, full of wet dreams that, at moments of high fiscal excitement, rise to the positively oceanic?

As it turns out, the answer is yes and yes again. Laughter provoked by bubbles and froth is apt to disappear as quickly as they do, leaving behind nothing but a little stale drool. To be worth anything, it must arise from the more or less logical behaviour of more or less authentic people in more or less credible surroundings; and so it proves here. There's always something greasy and mean about Ian McKellen's Face, something grim and misanthropic about John Woodvine's Subtle: replicas of them both, Stepney slicker and Wapping heavy, may be found nowadays in and around Piccadilly Circus, separating tourists from their traveller's cheques. But the challenges they engineer for themselves are gorgeous in their intricacy, a maniac scramble from disguise to disguise, room setting to room setting, desperate expedient to desperate expedient, as they try to cope with the deluge of importunate clerks, shopkeepers, Spaniards and Anabaptists, all simultaneously expecting their pet fantasies to be fulfilled. It is an entertaining evening, no doubt of it, and yet it is also possible to believe in Mr Woodvine's last-ditch vindictiveness, his bared and snarling promise to hang himself and return to haunt the primly triumphant McKellen 'in the flock-bed and the buttery'. Mr Nunn has not scuttled the comedy. He has deepened it; and production of Ben Jonson will, I suspect, never be quite the same again.

And what else is tumbling down the chimney of Critics' Castle this Yuletide? First, Richard O'Keefe, trailing what he describes as 'an attempt to feel the nation's pulse through the medium of five ordinary people'. It seems an exaggerated claim, fruit of the common but arrogant tendency to confuse the troubles of Britain with those of one's own coterie. *Pinch Me Not* isn't quite the *Heartbreak House of* the querulous 1970s, then, still less the *Cherry Orchard* of the fidgety red-brick graduate; but it's remarkably confident in its handling of those being unwillingly propelled through the one-way door into middle age. Mr O'Keeffe possesses gifts lavished on few by the theatrical gods. He can see, and show, pain in comedy and comedy in pain. He also enjoys thrusting his people into fresh perspectives, suddenly forcing us to recognise how insufferable the seemingly sufferable can be and vice versa. Both talents coalesce especially happily at the play's climax, when the most captivating, self-absorbed and helpless character onstage acts out a death-scene on his bedroom balcony, not knowing he's swallowed plant-food instead of paraquat. Altogether, it's an accomplished debut; and if, as seems distinctly possible, the West End producers come in search of loot, I hope they will resist the temptation to shove neon names in the slots so ably filled by Stephanie Turner, Patrick Drury and the other members of John Tydeman's cast.

The National's *Gawain* is a fine piece of unisex theatre, grabbing the girls with its ingenious dances, the boys with the grisly opening in which our Arthurian hero slices off the chlorophyl-tinted giant's head as if it were an overgrown artichoke, and both sides with the jaunty mime that accompanies his trek north in search of his come-uppance. But I wonder if either fully grasped the ending, which spares Gawain from death on the grounds that he has proved his honour by resisting the temptation to commit adultery. Or perhaps children nowadays are less innocent than those of us who grew up when there were ration-books for everything, including worldly wisdom. No such problems, however, with David Wood's *Gingerbread Man*, which is all about the strife between a predatory mouse and some kitchen odds and ends. I must admit to a persistent failure to be charmed by the cosy English habit of animating things vegetable and mineral, in this case a salt cellar, a pepperpot, and a grumpy but good-hearted teabag who learns to 'escape from myself and find friends'. Though the idea is presumably to remind the tots of their own size and status and of the awesome power of the 'big ones', heard here booming vague threats from the flies, I myself still wonder if I would have found it easy to identify with the existential agonies of a clump of Darjeeling, however small I was. But tomorrow's men and women screeched, literally screeched, with delight at it all.

Let me accelerate over the week's musicals, wondering in passing which is the direr. *Drake's Dream*, which follows the noted tar on a round-trip from and to Plymouth, and manages to prove the earth flat as well as wet? Or *The Magic Man*, which hies from Chicago and tends to explain why it is known as the Windy City? The latter, I think, though it does parcel some decent conjuring into its feebly meandering fable. There are, thank goodness, solider memories to take into the New Year Time, and a little space, for an orbit of 1977

Worthwhile plays: Wesker's *Wedding Feast*, Gray's *Dog Days*, Ayckbourn's *Jus Between Ourselves*, de Fillipo's *Filumena* maybe Edgar's *Destiny* and Bennett's *Old Country*. New dramatists: Robert Holman Stephen Lowe, James Robson and (now Richard O'Keeffe. Newish reputations whicl grew: Pam Gems and Barry Keeffe. Les forgettable revivals: *The Alchemist* (natur ally), *St Joan*, *The Madras House*, th Nottingham *Cherry Orchard*, *Rosmersholm The Plough and the Stars*, and the Yor miracle plays at the National. Finest per formances: McKellen, Sinden and Ala Howard in everything, Eileen Atkins's *Joan*, David Schofield in *The Elephant Ma* Sheila Hancock in *The Deep Blue Sea*. Be company by far: RSC. Saddest loss: Teren Rattigan. Strangest event: *Every Good Bo Deserves Favour*, the Stoppard-Previn-RS LSO one-night-stand at the Festival Ha Most forgettable revival: The Nationa *Julius Caesar*. Biggest triumph of quanti over quality: William Douglas-Hom Largest mouth: John Osborne. Abyss c partment: British musicals. And now bri on the Bisodol and the Disprin, the Kwe and the Kaolin-with-Morphine: it's time 1978.

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Television

Russell Davies

Gift Rapt

The Christmas TV trailers have been less than encouraging. The ITV ones have been less than bearable. Their promised 'highlights' featured some shapeless bout of violence from *The Guns of Navarone*; Benny Hill, in a vest and fright-wig, playing billiards and ripping up the table as he ogles a bint; and Danny La Rue, in an embarrassingly leaden snatch of his failed feature film *Our Miss Fred*, uttering a dismal pun on 'scrubbers'. It all makes the Wonder of Woolies advert look like a vision of Olympus.

As I write, BBC-1 has just got in the first seasonal blow, in the shape (ah, flattery!) of *Nationwide's* much-advertised pantomime. Since the *Nationwide* regulars seem to spend a good deal of the year dressing up for larky items of this kind, it was not much of a change to see them kitted out as characters from *The Wizard of Oz*. The attraction lay in guessing which distinguished guest-artiste would be the next to pop out from behind the scenery. 'Even Top People smile, once in a while' was the theme, though most of the Top People I saw wore that panic-stricken poker-face which is the sure sign of under-rehearsal. Cyril Smith, who was rightly judged to require no special costume, took his intervention so seriously that one could hardly distinguish his performance from his usual one. The Chancellor of the Exchequer came out of it comparatively well, even if he did over-punch his line about 'the International Magicians' Fund' and slipped a duff chord into his piano rendering of *Over the Rainbow*, and said 'Silly billies' in tones completely unreminiscent of Mike Yarwood. Whether Mr Healey was wise to show up at all is a matter that will doubtless be well aired at many a political Christmas table. In my opinion, the show needed to be far better done to make it worth his while. Such feeble stuff is best left to Norman St John Stevas – though he has so little *gravitas* the audience loses the essential feeling that he is demeaning himself – and, surprisingly, to Robert McKenzie, who threw himself into his non-material with the right sort of chaotic glee.

Much the biggest heap of junk the BBC has put on show for some time came in *The Queen's Jubilee Gifts* (BBC-2), where Angela Rippon and Mike Neville enthused their way round a memorably dreadful array of unsolicited tributes. Which were worse, the hand-tooled horrors perpetrated by straining amateur craftsmen and awe-struck children all over this fair land, or the solid-gold replicas of their own beds sent in by Arab potentates? The latter, without doubt, bereft as they were even of pathos. Why is it that whenever artefacts are designed expressly as 'gifts', their makers rush to lard and festoon them with horribly lavish ornamentation? The Gift Department of any shop, especially at Christmas, will without fail be at its most unrelievedly ghastly.

These wee gifties represented the dirty end of a spectrum whose dazzling upper reaches were revealed by Sir Huw Wheldon in the last of his *Royal Heritage* programmes (BBC-1). Here we saw the *good* stuff the House of Windsor has piled up over the 20th century. I don't begrudge them it nearly as much as some of the chaps at the NS, I admit, but I still wish programmes of this kind were not made into a historical whitewash of the monarchy. In between his endearing 'ers' and 'ahs' (he is retreating fast to his *All Your Own* manner of 20 years ago – not inappropriately, since *All Your Own* would have made a good title here), Wheldon managed to give the impression that Edward VII, for one, was a man of almost uncontrollably heroic talent, good-humour, candour and fortitude. The old films of the man waddling around the world in his tweeds, treating all and sundry to his baleful, Clement Freudulent gaze, failed to bear Wheldon out.

But the latter half of the programme was largely rescued by the ever-reliable Queen Mother, whose gift for television, it is plain, has been seriously under-exploited. Blighted by neither the sense-of-responsibility stiffness of her elder daughter, nor the raging unhumility of her son-in-law, she came across as placid without being infuriating. The family treasures on view were of course superb, though getting on for meaningless in the mass – and none more distressingly 'gift'-like than the works of Fabergé, which are *Stars on Sunday* done into gemstones.

We saw the end of *When the Bwoot Cooms In* (BBC-1), and many of us regretted its ceasing. Considering what a fixture James Bolam was in the public mind as a Likely Lad, I think he has done exceptionally well to rebuild himself into such a solidly ambiguous ratbag as Jack Ford. The story-line in this series has lately shown signs of decay: fantasy aristocrats, conmen and unaccountably tolerated maniacs have taken over from people. But the regular cast of shirt-sleeved Geordies has been tremendous. James Garbutt and Jean Heywood sustained the likeliest marriage on TV; their sons were equally well played by Edward Wilson and John Nightingale; and Rosalind Bailey, as Sarah, treated the camera to – or with – a rare flirtatiousness. *The Duchess of Duke Street* (BBC-1) is failing fast. Having created a strong character in Gemma Jones's Louisa, they seem intent now on squeezing her to death between human bookends – her posh, stage-struck daughter and her slimy old Mum. It isn't good for business: literally, because it's the Bentinck that suffers. It no longer feels like an hotel.

A common point of excellence in these two drama series has been their signature tunes – Alex Glasgow's high-pitched fishy ditty and Alexander Faris's tea-and-crumpets wind ensemble respectively. But my 1977 sig-tune prize must go to BBC-2's *Rugby Special*. This is a programme that rarely comes alive until the last few minutes, when highlights of an all-Welsh game are often shown. And at its best, it suffers from the boyish rant of Nigel Starmer-Smith. But the sig-tune, all a-twang with synthesisers, is the very acme of galumphing-music.

Art

John Spurling

Lost Paths

Art in One Year: 1935 *Tate*
Carved-Modelled-Constructed *Tate*

Jubilee Year ends with a small but fascinating exhibition at the Tate. Occupying only one room, its theme is George V's Jubilee year, 1935, when abstractionists and surrealists vied for the leadership of the *avant-garde* (Herbert Read later complained that he was 'in the position of a circus rider with his feet planted astride two horses') and the more overtly traditional painters and sculptors worked on, as always, regardless. Not that Meredith Frampton's naturalistic *Portrait of a Young Woman* – remote and statuesque in her long, cream skirt and lilac blouse between a cello and a vase of camelia leaves against a Wedgwood blue background – is quite regardless of surrealism, nor that its ordered calm is not shared by Maillol's sturdy group of formation dancers, *The Three Nymphs*, and Hepworth's white marble abstract, *Three Forms*.

The more one looks, the more this atmosphere of cool, poised stasis seems to dominate the show, whatever the superficial differences in style and influence. Sickert's and John's portraits, Magritte's doll-like figures, Nicholson's white relief, Nash's geometrical landscape *Equivalents for the Megaliths*, Algernon Newton's view of buildings reflected in a canal, Ravilious's watercolour of the inside of a greenhouse, even Wyndham Lewis's *The Surrender of Barcelona*, with its frieze of armoured knights against a city made of elongated cubes and cylinders: all project a world fit for Frampton's elegant woman and the fragile objects surrounding her to live in. The fact that they still survive on the far side of the actual world they belonged to (whose leading spirit, the *ci-devant* artist Adolf Hitler, also dreamed his classical dreams, notably for the rebuilding of Linz), gives them a sense of pathos which they could not have had then. To our eyes, Klee's sinister blue phantasmagoria *Walpurgis Night* must appear the most realistic.

Earlier this year, as part of its otherwise rather turgid salute to Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, the Royal Academy exhibited a selection of British paintings from the Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition of 1887. Generally agreed at the time to be the quintessence of contemporary art since Victoria's accession, these were nearly all romantic narrative pieces, ranging from the costume dramas of Burne-Jones, Alma-Tadema and William Shakespeare Burton (*The Wounded Cavalier*) to contemporary heart-wringers such as Frederick Walker's *The Lost Path* (a mother struggling through a snow-storm with her baby in her arms), Orchardson's *Mariage de Convenance* and Lady Elizabeth Butler's stirring *Balaclava*. True, Sir Herbert von Herkomer's *Hard*

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Times, first exhibited in 1885, dealt directly with the consequences of the economic depression of the period, and Turner's *The Sun of Venice Going to Sea* (exhibited in 1843) alluded through its accompanying verse to the doom an empire might expect, but otherwise the prevailing note was a combination of tearfulness, nostalgia and sideways sexuality. Meanwhile, beyond the studios, the new Germany dominated Europe, Professor J. R. Seeley had prophesied (in 1883) that the future lay with Russia and the United States, and the already defensively-minded British Empire was making its final burst of expansion into Africa.

So it might be useful to examine the art shown in 1977 for its political entrails. There's been no shortage of evidence, ranging from retrospectives of seniors such as Burra, Leach, Frost and Sutherland (his portraits), through cross-sections of the Sixties generation in the two-art *Hayward Annual* and the Tate's *Artists of the Sixties*, to the two great Jubilee jamborees – sculpture in Battersea Park and the paintings at the Royal Academy. There is also at present an excellent mini-retrospective of British 20th-century sculpture at the Tate which, under the neutral title *Carved-Modelled-Constructed*, includes the aesthetic primitivism of Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska, Gill and the early Moore and Hepworth; the half-brutal, half-humorous mythologism prevalent in the Fifties (examples by Armitage, Chadwick, Dalwood, Clatworthy, Frink); and the cool layouts of constructionists such as Caro, Turnbull, Tim Scott and Kenneth Martin. These last include a jokey piece by Bruce Lacey called *Boy, Oh Boy, Am I Living!* in which a pulley driven by a noisy motor (and it must be driving the Tate's attendants out of their minds) intermittently raises the left leg of an automaton made out of pieces of junk.

Though it dates from as long ago as 1964, Bruce Lacey's piece still symbolises the chief preoccupation of many contemporary artists. Against the continuing tradition of abstraction, varied and enlivened since 1935 by the influence of American Expressionism on painting and of the constructionism of David Smith and Caro on sculpture, there has been a parallel movement which one might loosely characterise as send-up or media art. This is art turned in on itself, spoofing, practical-joking art, playing games with its canvas or material, with nature, with mass-produced images (commercial art, cartoons, photography, television) with art within art. A curious example of how it has affected even a traditional artist is Howard Hodgkin, who not only hovers between abstraction and figuration but encloses rich, billowing colours inside artful, *trompe l'oeil* frames.

The results are guarded, equivocal, concerned to give nothing away. Somebody looking back from a later age would have the impression of artists caught between dream and reality, mistrusting both, parodying both. Far from projecting a world, they would seem desperate to avoid projecting one. So how should we read the auspices? It looks like a solidly realistic, unself-conscious, headmasterly world ahead. Jim Callaghan's world, perhaps; or Margaret Thatcher's.

Weekend Competition

No 2495 **Set by Val Policella**

The Editor of the *Sunday Times* recently announced on *Any Questions* that not only would he give Prince Charles a job, but he would – if he could – 'put him to lead the Insight team'. Competitors are asked to imagine the results of this – or any other – Royal journalistic appointment (not too much 'one' and 'corgis' by the way). Up to 150 words; by 13 January.

Result of No 2492 **Set by Al Fresco**

Sumo wrestling is 'the survival of the fattest'. We asked for other definitions of sports and games.

Report **by Little Keith**

I know the signs: I've been through this before. By day, mangled switchboards, winded postmen, the great crowd churning in the sombre shadow of the comp complex. By night, the complex searchlights play over Lincoln's Inn Fields, on the lookout for rogue photographers, anarchists, bounty-hunters. May I put your minds at rest? Will Mr Keats be going in for the Editorship, you ask. *Will* Mr Spiro Keats be 'going in' for the Editorship. . . . Hardly. It was to make way for Dick in '70, of course, that Spiro first spurned the post, and since that time he has made no secret of his growing indifference to public life. When the staff delegation trooped up with their renewed entreaties on the Monday after the news broke, Mr Keats simply flashed Fat Jeff and told him to kick them down the stairs (actually, Fat Jeff got horribly creamed for his pains, and it was left to the Lemon Kid to bushwhack them on the third floor). All right? Will you stop pestering us now? As for this week's entry, your talent for cheeky one-liners had full scope (in fact it was all we thought you could handle in the run-up to Christmas). A quid an entry; but again, no one quite good enough for a damned elusive Partridge.

Whippet racing: the curs of the working classes
Fencing: the art of missing the point
Eisteddfod: one damn sing after another
Strip poker: the game's not worth the scandal
Professional tennis: gross net profits
BOB SCOTT

Golf: a pitch 'n' sink drama
Poker: a pack of liars
Watermelon-seed spitting: the saliva of the fittest
Boxing: the thickest of the survivors
Sexual athletics: the survival of the stiffest
MORAY MCGOWAN

Rambling: the course of the walking class
Roulette: for whom the ball rolls
Bridge: making the best of a bid job
Ballooning: rises keeping up with inflation
FRANK ANDERSON

Polo: jockey hockey
Rugby League: scar wars
Coursing: splitting hares
JIM ANTHONY

Billiards: pot-luck
Cross channel swimming: might and main
Packer cricket: playing to the salary
V. R. ORMEROD

Pigeon racing: pie in the sky
Backgammon: double, double, you're in trouble
Angling: a farewell to worms
J. TIMSON

Scrabble: crosswords for the clueless
Three-dimensional noughts and crosses:
OXO cubes
HERODOTUS Q. PLUGHOLE

Weight-lifting: careless rupture
Golf: taking steps to putt things right
W. H. YOUNG

Shot put: steroids shoving spheroids
Hang-gliding: the suicide's best chance of beating his Life Policy
JONATHAN FERNSIDE

Sand yachting: keels on wheels
Curling: rolling stones on ice
KEVIN MORRIS

Boxing: the sport of dukes
Drag-racing: the sport of queens
JOHN BENNETT

Table tennis: where East beats West
Ice hockey: Puck but no fairies
JOHN STANLEY

Golf: the abusive in pursuit of the elusive
Bingo: the impecunious in search of the improbable
P. W. R. FOOT

Rugby: the art of the passable
ROY KELLY

Bull-fighting: he who hesitates is tossed
MARY CLEMENCE

Fishing: the dole man's valium
MARTIN FAGG

Karate: chops with everything
PASCOE POLGLAZE

Table tennis: the sport of pings
A. KIDD

Rugby Union: fifteen men on one man's chest
E. S. GOODWILL

Weight-lifting: the lunge, the snort and the fall
JOHN P. O'BYRNE

Mastermind: squares putting pegs in round holes
B. MOORING

Ice hockey: pucking off
DAVID WILLIAMS

Stock car racing: bangers and smash
JAMES DOWELL

Golf: driving yourself to drink
W. J. WEBSTER

Vingt-et-un: twist 'n' shout
J. Y. WATSON

Transocean ballooning: passing water with a full bladder
GERRY HAMILL

Long-distance running: the arrival of the fittest
KEN WYKE

NS competitions: the survival of the slickest
STANLEY J. SHARPLES

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Tony Miles

Chess

No 64 **Grandmastery**

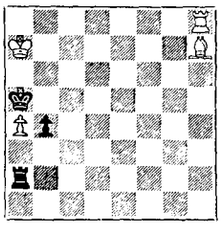
Most published Grandmaster games are smooth, flowing affairs. One side gets a slight advantage, increases it methodically, and applies a neat coup de grace. I would like to redress the balance a little with one that did not go exactly according to plan in Amsterdam this year.

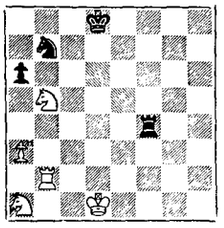
White: A. J. Miles **Black: G. Sosonko**

1. P-QB4, N-KB3; 2. N-QB3, P-K3; 3. P-K4. An increasingly popular method of avoiding the Nimzo-Indian. **3. . . .P-Q4; 4. P-K5, P-Q5; 5. P x N, P x N; 6. NP x P, Q x P; 7. P-Q4, P-QN3.** 7. . . . P-B4 is more common. **8. N-B3, B-N2; 9. B-Q3!?** A sharp choice. White invites . . .B x N when he would continue with P x B followed by Q-K2-K4 with a strong initiative in compensation for the smashed pawns. **9. . . .B-Q3?** Allowing a trick which I first saw at about the age of ten in a book of chess traps! **10. B-N5! B x N; 11. Q-Q2! B-B5!** Saving the queen, but at a considerable cost. **12. B x B, B x P; 13. R-KN1, B-N2; 14. B-K5, Q-B6; 15. B x NP, R-N1; 16. B x P!! R x B; 17. R x R, Q-R8ch; 18. K-K2, Q-B6ch.** The main idea was 18. . . .Q x R; 19. Q-B4! when I was dearly hoping for 19. . . .Q-N7ch (-P-B4; 20. B x P) 20. K-Q3 (though K-Q1 is simpler), P-B4; 21. B-N6ch, K-B1; 22. R-B7ch, K-N1; 23. R-B8ch!! K x R; 24. Q-R6ch, K-K2; 25. Q-N7ch, K-Q3; 26. Q-B8ch, K-B3; 27. B-K8ch, N-Q2; 28. P-Q5ch, P x P; 29. Q-B6ch, K-B4; 30. Q-K7ch, K-B3; 31. B x N mate! One of the practical problems is that, after calculating such fantastic variations, if one's opponent puts up serious resistance it is rather difficult to come back to earth and start working again. **19. K-B1, N-Q2; 20. Q-K3, Q-R8ch; 21. R-N1, Q x P; 22. B-K4.** White is the exchange ahead and should win, but his King is a little insecure and there are some technical difficulties. **22. . . .B x B; 23. Q x B, Q-R6ch; 24. K-R2, 0-0-0.** I confess that when calculating earlier I had the hallucination that 25. Q-R8 was mate here! **25. R-N3, Q-R4ch; 26. Q-B3, Q-R2; 27. Q-Q3, Q-R4ch; 28. Q-B3, Q-R2; 29. R-QB1.** On 29. K-Q2 I was worried about . . .N-K4 (30. Q-K2, Q-B4). **29. . . .K-N1; 30. P-R4?** A pointless move. I played it quickly thinking that P-R4-R5 could do no harm and would bring me two moves nearer the time control. In fact it just gives black two tempi and opens the QR file for him! **30. . . .P-K4; 31. P-R5, P-K5; 32. Q-R1, Q-B4; 33. P x P, RP x P; 34. Q-R4, N-B3; 35. R-QR1, Q-K3; 36. R-R4.** White has great trouble coordinating his forces. **36. . . .R-K1; 37. Q-N5, P-K6!** Commencing dangerous counterplay. I had anticipated the move and (correctly!) thought I could survive. **38. R x P, N-K5; 39. Q-B4.** Not 39. Q-N2?? Q-QB3! **39. . . .P-B4.** Here I immediately wrote 40. R-N4 (the best move) on my score sheet but having about 30 seconds to spare I decided to check that it was all right, and somehow produced **40. K-K1?** Now the position is drawn (after 40. R-N4 – threatening P-B3 – white is still better) but it is white who has trouble proving it. **40. . . .Q-N3; 41. R-N4.** Now forced. **41. . . .Q-N8ch; 42. K-K2, K-N2(!).** I had spent most of my time deciding that 42. . . .Q-B8 (inter alia) drew and had not considered this strong quiet move. **43. P-B5!? N x Pch: 44. K-Q3(?), N-Q4; 45. Q-B3, R-K5!** A move which I'd completely overlooked (of course). In contrast Sosonko was merrily bashing out adjournment analysis. **46. P-B6ch! K x P.** If 46. . . .K-N1; 47. R x R followed by Q-B8ch. But 46. . . .K-R3 is fascinating:— 47. R x R? P x Rch; 48. K x P, N x R; 49. Q-R3ch, K-N4 wins. 47. Q-K2!? N-B5ch? 48. K-Q2, N x Q? 49. R-R3 mate, but 47. . . . N x Rch wins for black (48. K-B3ch, K-R4). 47. R-R4ch? K-N4. Best is 47. K-Q2!! when 47. . . .N x R(K3)? 48. Q-K2ch, K-R2; 49. R-R4ch, K-N1; 50. R-R8ch! or 47. . . .N x R(N4); 48. R-R3ch and Q x Pch or 47. . . . R x R; 48. R-R4ch and Q x Nch, are all satisfactory for white. **47. R-B4ch, K-N4; 48. R x R, P x Rch; 49. K x P! Q-N3ch; 50. K x N, Q-Q3ch; 51. K-K4, Q-K3ch; 52. K-Q3, Q x Rch; 53. K-K3.** I now felt confident enough to offer a draw – Sosonko declined. **53. . . . K-N5; 54. Q-B8ch, K-B6; 55. Q-R3ch, K-B7; 56. P-B4.** Sosonko offered a draw – I declined! **56. . . .Q-K3ch; 57. K-B2.** At this point the game was adjourned for the second time. I retired to a nearby bar to steady my nerves. Two or three pints later I began to see winning chances, e.g. 57. . . .Q-B4; 58. Q-K3, P-N4; 59. Q-R5, Q-Q2; 60. K-N3, P-N5; 61. Q-B5ch, R-N6; 62. P-B5, K-R5; 63. P-B6, P-N6; 64. Q-K7, Q x P; 65. P-B7, P-N7; 66. Q-K8ch and P-B8=Q. However, when the game was eventually resumed, I found that black had sealed the superior. **57. . . .Q-Q4.** So. . . . **58. K-K3. Draw Agreed.**

Finally, in case you have nothing to do one cold winter's evening, a couple of problems to keep you occupied:

Problem 64(a)
White, to play, has an extra piece, but is in danger of losing his last pawn. Can he win?





Problem 64(b)
Too easy? Well, maybe this will be more to your liking. White to play, again an extra piece, but this time it's attacked and if 1. N-B3, R-B8ch draws. So, how should the game go? I should add that if white can retain his extra piece the position is a theoretical win even with rooks exchanged – provided, of course, that he keeps his pawn – and I do not require further proof.

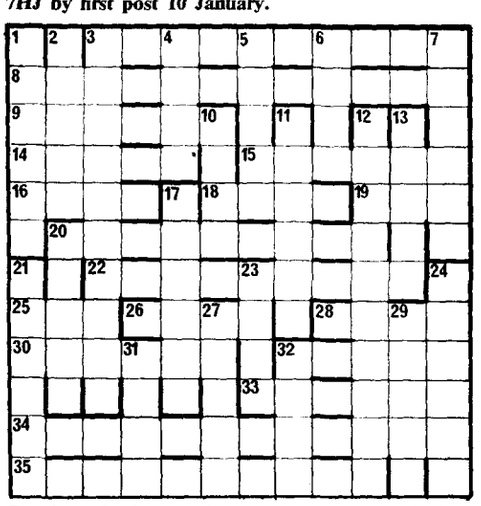
As well as the usual monthly competition awards there will be a special £10 prize to the best solution of these two problems. Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 11 January.

Solution to Problem 62

1. Q-N3! P-N4 (If 1. . . . B x Q; 2. B-B6ch. R x B; 3. R-Q8ch, K-K2; 4. R(1)-Q7 mate or 1. . . . B-N4; 2. P-QR4); 2. Q-Q3 (threatening R-Q8ch), B-K2; 3. R x B Resigns. (3. . . . P x R; 4. Q-Q7ch mates quickly).

Salamanca: Christmas Crossword

PRIZES: Book tokens of £5 for the first five correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ by first post 10 January.



Bar-lines begin words, end words, and isolate letters. Chambers 20th Century Dictionary, Revised Edition with supplement is recommended, but does not give the simple compound at 3, nor the name at 5.

ACROSS

3. Setting store by command to child hoping for late visitation? (2 words, 10).
8. Why prepare any brew right away for the 8th-day *toast*? (3 words, 12).
9. Ox's stable companion, perhaps close to long time King (6).
14. But terrific wrapping, say (5).
15. Realise one's not required when unwrapped? Unwanted gift may go for this (6).
16. Distinctive flavour and stickiness of food (4).
18. Sort of fiery pile about, when life with one goes (4).
19. When it's mass, his meaning's fully heard by God (3).
20. Child is smart perhaps this time (9).
22. What's sent now, a laic diversion of the heart (9).
25. Excessively tucked into oranges (3).
26. Marking wonder to mankind? That's what the Bethlehem star was (4).
28. One beginning to show one's King within (4).
30. Recipe using chine with dressing, which may do this to it? (6).
32. Very good hat that's crush-proof (5).
33. Myself, shining as the star? (This solution may be taken) (6).
34. Old travellers like us hard and foul-smelling in the rainy South (3 words, 12).
35. On horseback perhaps, with p-pointed weapon held back in hanging support (10).

DOWN

1. This calls for a round of drinks . . . Cheers! (6)
2. Thank-you letter once sent to him? (5).
3. Bird killed for immediate cooking, awkward catch netted by a star-trekker? (10).
4. Hearing a secretive person's no saint at heart (4).
5. Terrier's home, crucial about rights (5).
6. It's an old bird, so's any poorly? (4).
7. These introduce King in verse (6)
10. Tearful epitaphs? (4).
11. Foreign crib with parts transposed (6).
12. *In singing the festive song*, we see that any one of the old ships —— (10).
13. It may make one fall after a thrashing with it (5).
17. And with those that fly displayed by a man in red? (6).
20. One involved in endless task waits to come from it, perhaps (5).
21. Trifles found underfoot in stalls (6).
23. One of these was full? See leading Nazarene born in incongruous extremes (4).
24. Unassuming state of being with this holy man (6).
27. Finished having last portions? Indeed, I leave uncomfortably (5).
29. Gifts ideal for boxing-days (5).
31. Defensive laughter (4).
32. Scornful-sounding spirit (4).

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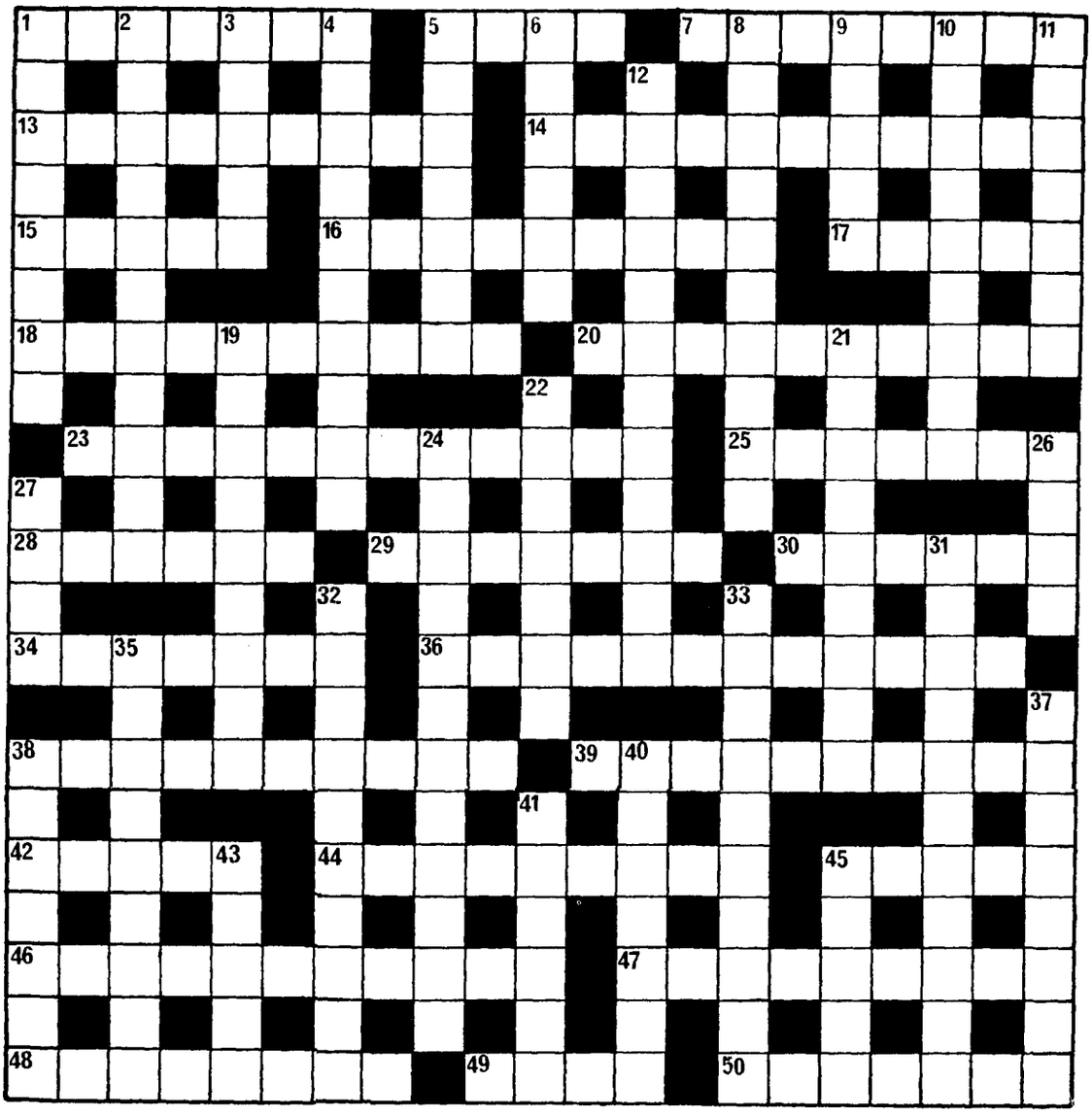
CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD 1247



BIGGER PRIZES

Book tokens of £5 for the first five correct solutions opened. Entries to Christmas Crossword 1247, New Statesman, Great Turnstile London WC1V 7HJ by first post 10 January 1978.

Solution to No 1245

Prizewinners to No 1245
V. C. C. Saunders (Oxford)
Charles Duce (Valkeakoski)
Will Skipsey (Ongar)

Apologies for publishing the wron solution last week — crossword 124 and its solution appeared togethe What an honest lot you are! Severa solvers rang up to tell us of ou mistake and most quite properl resisted the temptation to send i their entries regardless. We can sensibly give any prizes now an we will publish missing solutio 1244 on 6 January.

ACROSS

1. Back part of body about to preserve food (7).
5. A mother for a motherless one (4).
7. Where there is planning behind the scenes to give a footballer space (8).
13. Directors enter competitions to discover where the food is kept (9).
14. One of the scholars who translate Latin stories (11).
15. Giants among progressives (5).
16. Back they go east without a vessel for this plant (9).
17. Time to join and become a poet's friend (5).
18. One who draws a circle in an ancient building (5, 5).
20. They bear arms and carve up chosen cuts (10).
23. It says holly berries are white (4, 3, 5).
25. The son is as disorganised as a very rich man (7).
28. Man who starts travelling with his car in reverse (6).
29. Mr Miles turns out to be not the person who enjoys Christmas fare (7).
30. Fate means nothing to the clergy (6).
34. Sing carols or grieve about an animal (7.)
36. Etiquette of those who staff the board? (5, 7).
38. Refreshments provided when we met casually in the stalls (10).
39. The beginning of the book has no villain, but a disreputable person (5, 5).
42. Man swallowed by animal for a drink (5).
44. Food sometimes found in crackers? (9).
45. The river for a southern journey (5).
46. They come from the land of Hope (11).
47. Pantomime character or rugger player (9).
48. 'None but the brave —— the fair' (Dryden) (8).
49. A thing for playing with sent at Christmas (4).
50. Presents which may be found in the right places (7).

DOWN

1. Gives help when we hear people easily taken in (8).
2. The wrong I mean to put right for it is pressing (11).
3. Fragments of a piece of writing about a preposition (5).
4. Rider whose manor is in ruins (10).
5. May give us a tree, although opposed to the festive spirit (7).
6. Love affairs turn sour by morning (6).
8. Film star in time after an explanatory comment (10).
9. 'A slipper and subtle —— a finder-out of occasions' (*Othello*) (5).
10. How a bird is discovered in various complications with the post office (9).
11. Have a word with the members on the contents of the crackers (7).
12. Cambridge establishment discovers the gravity in selling coke freely (5, 7).
19. Clashing when saints are involved with a don (9).
21. They are invented by subeditors but the chief puts in the padding (9).
22. Saint born in a dirty port (7).
24. Legal summons to conviviality? (4, 2, 3, 3).
26. A cricketer for Christmas? (4).
27. Store in boxes to wait until Christmas (4).
31. Mountain railway carries ingredients of dope for naval device (11).
32. Becoming Christmas-coloured? (10).
33. It keeps hands on wrist (10).
35. Christmas watchers go quietly with a man in broken pieces (9).
37. Table decorations which make a kind of record with mixed greens (8).
38. Recovered from the celebrations, so turn left (7).
40. The funny huge lad showed a sense of humour (7).
41. Motorists about to throw a queen (6).
43. A star without one seen in church (5).
45. A lady has to show contempt thus well (5).

SETSQUARE

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EDWARD PYGGE'S ANSWERS

Washing

1: Naaman
2: Archie Rice (*The Entertainer*)
3: Jaggers (*Great Expectations*)
4: Mrs Porter and her daughter
5: At the Mock Turtle's school
6: Ford Madox Brown
7: Chesterton
8: Flushing Meadow
9: Sir Robert Peel (acc. Disraeli)
10: Susanna
11: Macbeth
12: Marat
13: Janet Leigh (*Psycho*)
14: Claude Rains
15: alias Laughing Water

Seventy Seven

1: Paul Johnson
2: Lord Clark
3: Don Revie
4: Edward Upward
5: The Duke of Edinburgh
6: Richard Ingrams
7: Simenon
8: Diana Dors
9: *The Times* obituarist
10: Geoffrey Grigson

Lookalikes

1a: *Moby Dick*
b: Peter de Vries *The Vale of Laughter*
c: *Anna Karenina*
d: Nabokov *Ada*
2a: Arthur Greenwood
b: the inhabitants of Wigton (via Melvyn Bragg)
3: Members of Mary McCarthy's *The Group*; and of 'The Group'
4: William Gerhardi(e)

Any Other Name?

1a: Jack Nicklaus
b: Jack Charlton
c: Jimmy Hill
d: Malcolm Macdonald
e: Alberto Juantorena
f: David Fairclough
g: Jacques Fouroux
2a: Sylvia Plath, as author of *The Bell Jar*
b: Kingsley Amis, *Colonel Sun*
c: Lawrence Durrell, *Panic Spring*
d: Anthony Burgess, *Inside Mr Enderby*

Greyhound Bus

a: Gene Pitney
b: Tony Bennett
c: Al Jolson
d: Fats Domino
e: Hoagy Carmichael

In the Middle

1a: Richard III
b: in *The Owl and the Pussycat*
c: Piglet
2a: Tom the piper's son
b: the Prodigal Son
c: Circe
3a: James McClure
b: Robert Baden-Powell
c: Sacheverell Sitwell
4a: Ogden Nash
b: Spike Hawkins
c: Lewis Carroll (*Sylvie and Bruno*)
5a: Rowley in *Crome Yellow*
b: Mr Wopsle in *Great Expectations*
c: Shylock
6: Those with an *r* in them (September-April) when fresh pork could be more safety eaten

Glad Rags

1: James Morris
2: Marie Stopes
3: Clodius
4: *From a View to a Death* (Anthony Powell)
5: Polly Oliver
6: Mr Toad
7: Leonora
8: Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in *Some Like It Hot*
9: Apollinaire, *Arbre*

No Catches

a: Jeremiah Clarke
b: Leopold Mozart
c: Robert Casadesus
d: E. C. Bentley
e: John Arden
f: Bruckner

Rising Fog

a: George V
b: Wilde
c: Emily Dickinson
d: Heine
e: Pitt
f: Casanova
g: Rabelais
h: Schubert
i: Disraeli
j: Goldsmith

Woof Woof

1: Hound of the Baskervilles
2: Norman Scott's dog
3: Francis Thompson
4: Thurber's dog
5: Johnson
6: Mme Roland
7: King Lear
8: Helen's (acc. Poe)
9: Pistol to Nym (*Henry V*)

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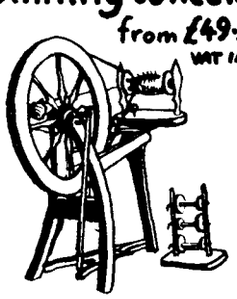

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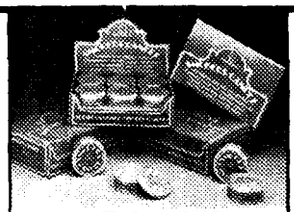

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Vol. 94 No. 2440/2441

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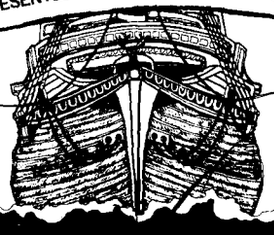

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